

Hello,

Thank you for taking testimony on S328

Farmworker housing is a very challenging, delicate, extremely important subject to our state

54,900 direct jobs

107,964 total agricultural jobs

Vermont population is 643,077

At this point with the program running since 2022 it would be extremely helpful to get a comprehensive report of farmworker housing needs!!

Not just focusing on housing owned by farmers.,

Nonprofits and developers should be aware of building affordable housing for farmworkers in agricultural communities..

It's already been demonstrated and developed in several several communities and states all across the country, including New York & Maine near Vermont..

Vermont housing experts and developers are not aware of this fact..

We already know what the program is doing how it is funded and how is critical. It gets more funds to continue this work that started in 2022..

The needs assessment that came out from VHCB in 2021 that they commissioned was strictly focused on on the farm housing!!

Farmworker housing is more than just on the Farm housing owned by the farmer Housing developers like nonprofits throughout Vermont, including the private sector, could develop homes off the farm for farmworkers to have a place to live. That's not connected to their employment. it could work on any Farm if the farm housing was developed in built..

That is why I suggest a new report that goes outside the work they're doing presently Not all farms have the capacity to develop farmworker housing!!

The Vermont, housing, developers and builders could build off the farm housing to meet those needs if it was demonstrated!!

Below our examples from other states

A report that recommends off the farm housing, technical support, and services for farmworkers is critical.

As the report in 2021 was short and focused on the work being done now on the Farm housing and there's more than that...

Work needed for Vermont

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MIDARD/bulletins/2bd8a85>

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<https://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/development/Pages/agriculture-workforce-housing.aspx>

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https://issuu.com/housinginfo/docs/ohcs_agricultural_worker_housing_study_2023_fnl-3

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<https://ruralhousingcoalition.org/farm-labor-housing/>

Example of off the farm housing developments

<https://www.manomaine.org/housing>

&

<https://www.harvestcouraptts.org/>

&

<https://tdshc.org/apartment-rentals/>

Also VHFA housing data doesn't support farmworker housing needs and data is limited in the data set for all agricultural workers in Vermont that is also a key factor preventing agricultural housing development from occurring off the farm by nonprofit housing organizations like Addison housing works, Ever North, Champlain, housing trust and other..

<https://housingdata.org/>

See Vermont

<https://feedingtheeconomy.com/>

I would suggest formalizing the ad hoc group as mentioned in the report 2021

There are many farmworker housing groups throughout our country

And should be created in Vermont

As other housing committees are already in Vermont Vermont needs one on farmer worker housing..

A committee working group or task forced being created

Would bring all the recommendations and suggestions to demonstrate all the needs completely

Thank you

Ernest Caswell (buster)