



Testimony to House General & Housing Committee
Elizabeth Bridgewater, Executive Director
January 23, 2025

Introduction to Windham & Windsor Housing Trust

Founded in 1987 with a mission to strengthen the communities of Southeast Vermont through the development and stewardship of permanently affordable housing and through ongoing support and advocacy for its residents.

Organizational Impact across 2 counties

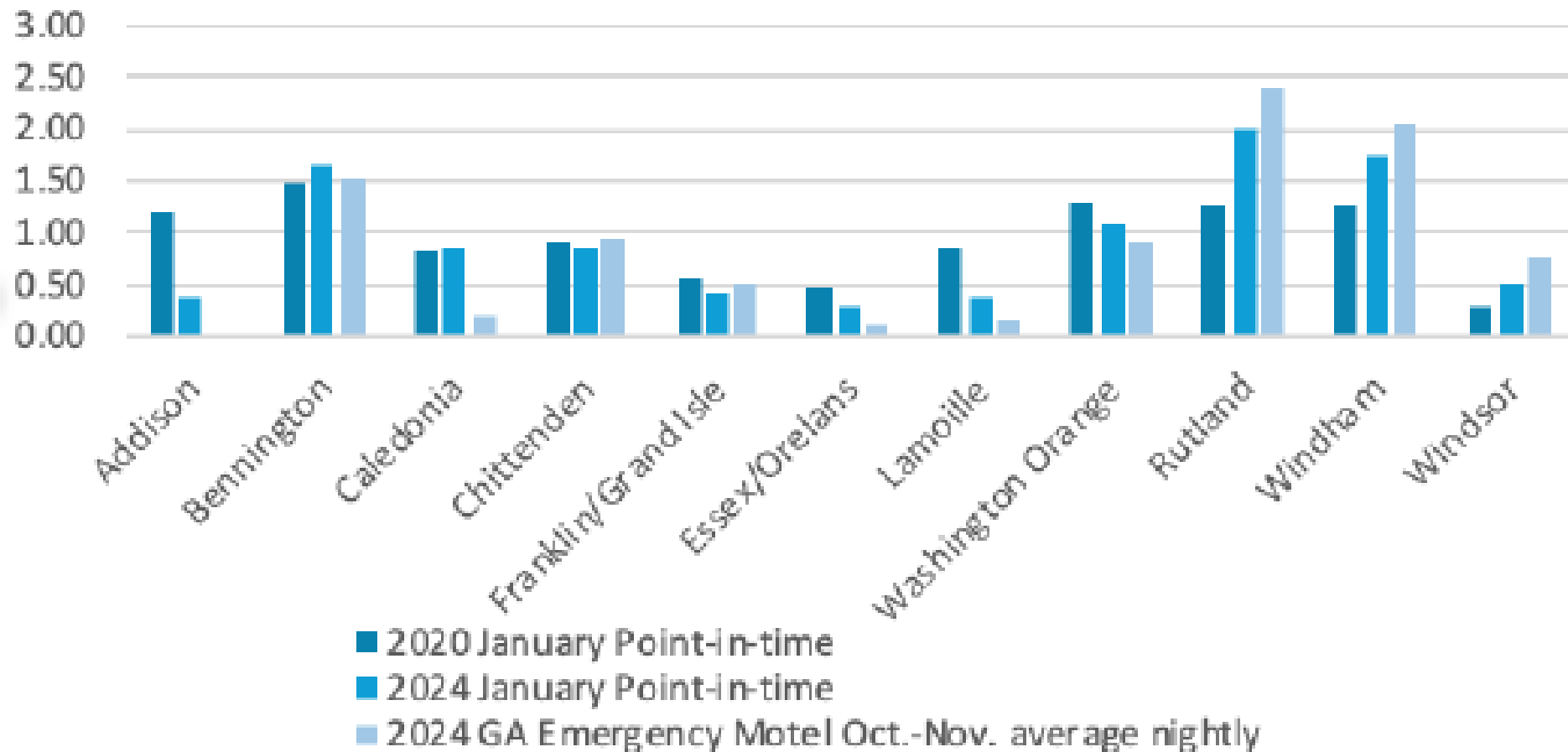
- ▶ 887 affordable apartments
 - ▶ 113 new units in pipeline, 25 of which will come online this summer.
- ▶ 42 mobile home lots in three parks
- ▶ 16 commercial units
- ▶ 145 Shared Equity Homes
- ▶ Homebuyer education - over 650 in the last five years
- ▶ Homeownership counseling - 1217 in the last five years
- ▶ New homebuyers - 229 in last five years
- ▶ Green Mountain Home repair - average of 25 per year
- ▶ Vermont Housing Improvement Program - 210 units since 9/2020
 - ▶ 125 units currently in construction. Another 25 in application stage
- ▶ 3 SASH Panels (Windsor, Dover, Brattleboro) serving over 200 residents

Tight housing market

- ▶ Out of state buyers increased 38% during pandemic years
- ▶ The percentage of seasonal use homes in Windham (30%) and Windsor (23%) counties is higher than the statewide average of 15%.
- ▶ Brattleboro, the largest population center we serve, has identified the need for 500 new homes.

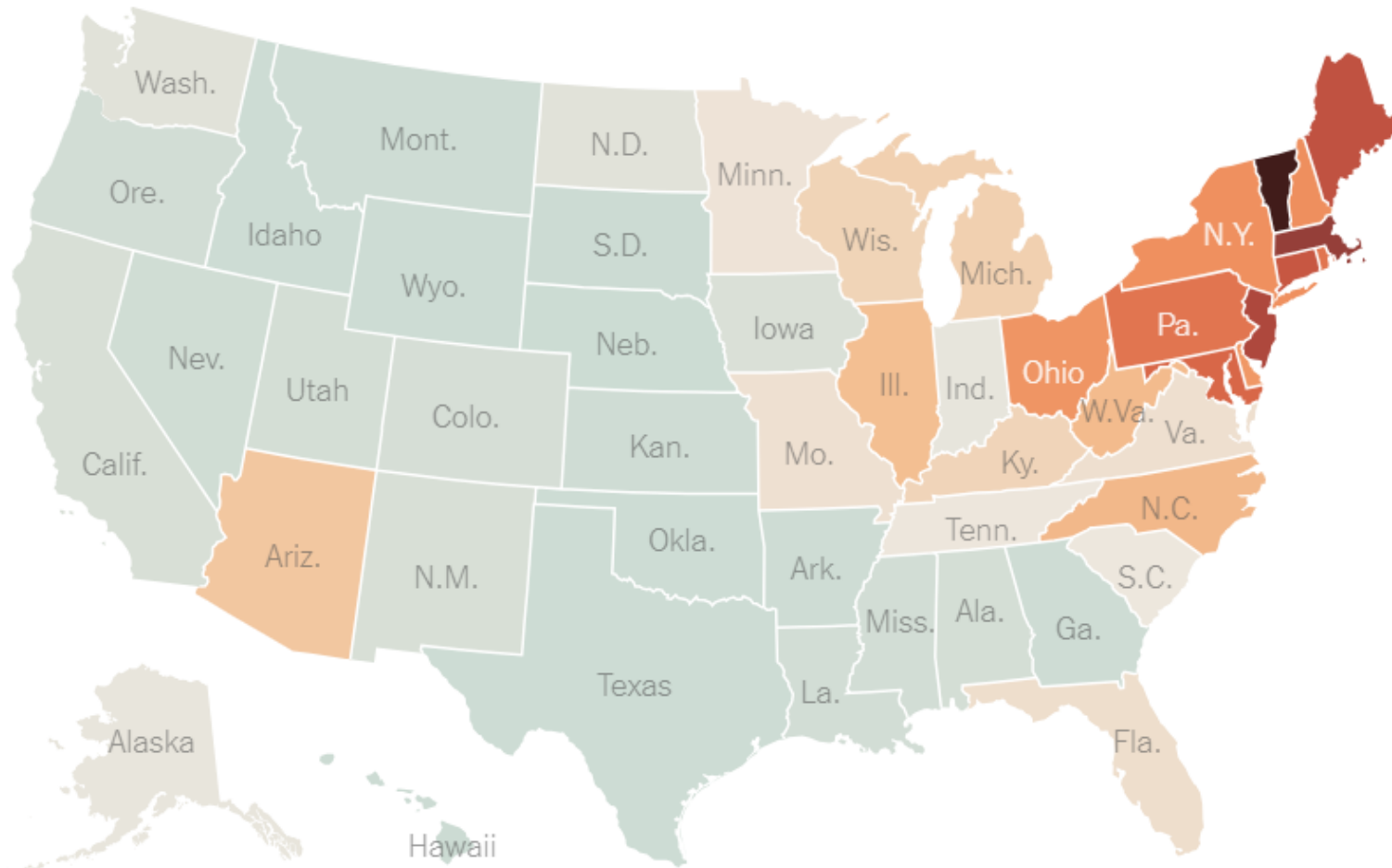
Rising homelessness

Comparison, population percentage to unhoused and emergency housed population percentage, 2020 & 2024

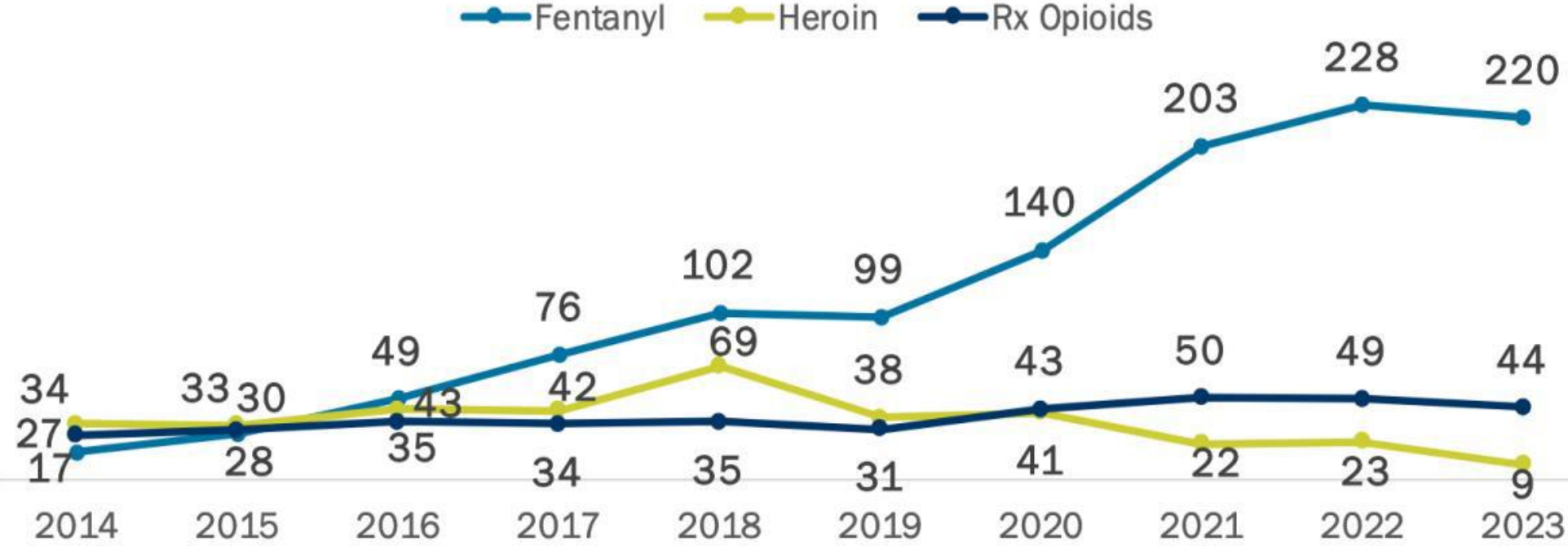


2019

Percent of drug seizures containing fentanyl

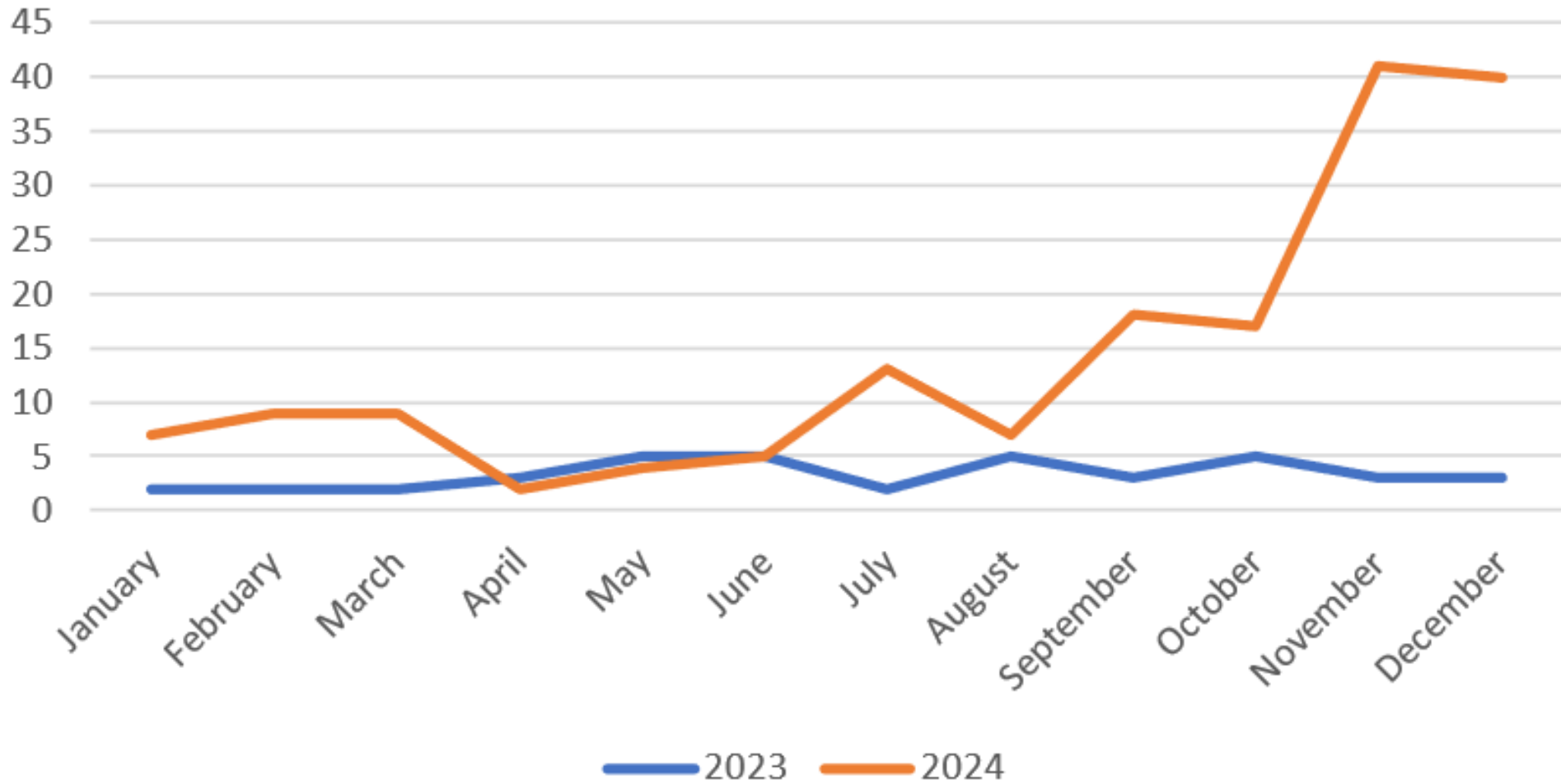


Fentanyl has flooded drug supply



One Example of Community Impact

Police Calls at 9 Canal



Legislative Priorities

▶ ***Capital Investments***

- ▶ Invest in new affordable homes with permanent affordability
- ▶ Invest in more shelter capacity
- ▶ Invest in more recovery housing

▶ ***Human Investments***

- ▶ *Continued and expanded funding for housing embedded service coordinators - SASH 4 ALL, Resident Service Coordination, Case Management Capacity*

▶ **Regulatory Reform**

- ▶ Appeal Reform

▶ **Landlord Relief Program**

Thank you!
Questions?