

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you today.

My name is Amy Scott. I am a resident of Rutland County. I manage the food program for BROCC community action in both Rutland and in Bennington Counties.

I am here today to ask you to:

1. Support Vermont Foodbank's request for \$5 million in the FY26 budget to ensure Vermont Foodbank and their partners are prepared when disasters strike our neighbors in towns across Vermont, as well as to purchase and distribute food, and support the network of community-based food shelves and meal sites.

I run one of the most active food shelves in the state of Vermont.

I grew up in Vermont, graduated from Woodstock Union High School and attended VSU Castleton.

In my early 20's I relocated to a small island at the base of North Carolina's Outer Banks where I lived for 18 years.

I weathered many storms on the "Crystal Coast". The most personal of these was Hurricane Irene, a category one storm that landed 35 miles to my north on August 27th 2011 at Cape Lookout National Seashore. Irene knocked power out for a few days and closed up our little restaurant for a week. I remember this storm not because of how it affected me in North Carolina but because it affected my mom in Gaysville Vermont.

After Irene my mom was on her own island. Route 107 was badly damaged and the roads around the town were washed out. There was no way for mom to get to a store and she was caring for my grandmother who had end stage Alzheimer's.

There is limited cell service in Gaysville Vermont. I could only watch, terrified, as the national news showed demolished parts of my home state. Once I knew mom was out of immediate danger, I wondered how she was set up for survival. In NC we had emergency food and water, so we were prepared.

In the aftermath of Irene, my mom says that she and her neighbors shared what was in their freezers and stayed close to home. Eventually, their thawing food became questionable. When we managed to have a conversation, I was worried for her about what they would eat.

Just when my mom and her community were at risk of being hungry, the Army Corps of Engineers came to the rescue. Roads were rebuilt and the stories of my ATV riding heroes bringing supplies to Graysville residents slowed. I was so relieved to know that help had arrived.

We have now learned that we need to be prepared for larger and smaller emergencies. If Irene's devastation hadn't been statewide would the Army corps of engineers have brought food? Who would have stepped in when the food ran out and neighbors had shared all that they had?

Vermonters rely on The Vermont Food Bank and its network of food resource partners, who step in for our everyday emergencies.

I am a resident of Vermont again. I bought one of those 100-year-old farmhouses in Rutland that is always in danger of failing somehow. I serve food to my community Monday – Friday at BROCC Community Action in this beautiful place that I love.

I serve 80-100 people daily that are just trying to get through the last disaster. The boiler went down, the freezer failed, a car accident or

an unplanned medical expense has left them with a budget too tight to afford groceries. I recently met a young father of 5 shopping with us while his wife was hospitalized. He needed food for his kids to take to school.

Without the Vermont Food Bank, I could not alleviate the burden for these families. It makes me think of my mom.

When I was hired @ BROC Community Food Shelf in 2021, 3Squares VT was fully funded. This allowed participants to shop at grocery stores for most of the month without having to use food shelves as often.

In April 2022 3squares Vermont was cut back to pre-pandemic levels. Currently, my shelves are the barest they have been in my experience. Due to shockingly high food prices, we are seeing growing food insecurity. 3sqvt again has work requirements, and Rutland County has one of the highest unemployment rates in the state. In 2024 BROC Community Food Shelf spent \$55,000 with the Vermont Food Bank and received 857,806LBS of food. My food cost is .06 CENTS a pound. That is BIG money and BIG hustle for a rural food shelf. The Vermont Foodbank supports HUNDREDS of food shelves like mine. Therefore, I am here on 3Squares Awareness Day to ask for your help. I URGE you to make sure I have food on my shelves. We need to relieve some of the financial and emotional burden of the food insecure families, seniors and disabled residents of Vermont. I will continue to do the heavy lifting, and YOU can:

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Thank you for your time, and for your continued support.