



February 18, 2025

Senate Agriculture Committee
Vermont State House
115 State Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05633-5301

Dear Senators Ingalls, Major, Collamore, Heffernan, and Plunkett,

Thank you for the opportunity to introduce ourselves to you. We hope this is the beginning of a warm and meaningful relationship.

The Connecticut River Watershed Farmers Alliance (CRWFA) is a farmer-run organization that works to promote land stewardship for clean waterways, productive landscapes, and the economic sustainability of our agricultural community. We do this by learning together, sharing knowledge and equipment, and by working together to solve common problems.

We represent a diverse group of farmers in the Connecticut River catchment area: large and small dairies, meat and egg producers, feed and forage producers, graziers, fruit, vegetable and specialty crop producers, and more. Some of us use conventional practices, some organic, and some both. We farm on more than 15,000 acres along miles of riverfront in both Vermont and New Hampshire. Our members also farm up tributaries and into the high points of the watershed.

Many of Vermont's most important soils lie immediately adjacent to the Connecticut River. These soils are the lifeblood of our local food production. Our farms contribute significantly to our region's economy, environment, food security, and quality of life.

All of our farmers care deeply about water quality, natural resources, and the ecological functioning of our landscape. As professional growers, we have learned that profitability and quality of life are just as integral to sustainable and regenerative land-use as are the practices we use.

Our members recently identified several groups of issues that affect the viability of farming in Vermont:

1. Affordability, tax burden, cost of living, and the importance of the Current Use program
2. Labor and workforce
3. Protection of farmland for farming & land access
4. Funding for supporting water quality, soil health, weather resiliency, and other farm-related issues
5. Difficulties accessing or with state and federal programs
6. Land-use planning, regulation, & changes to Required Agricultural Practices

As you know, some of these are specific to agriculture and many are not. As the legislature pursues solutions to challenging issues you will consider how the details will affect the agricultural community and economy.

We know how challenging your work can be to balance the needs of all of us. in Vermont Please consider us a resource - our farmers can offer a wide range of thoughtful ideas and insightful comments as you craft legislation.

We hope to see you again in Montpelier and on our farms.



Michael Snow

Executive Director (and farmer)



Paul Doton

Chair (and farmer)