

Lauren Weston

District Manager, Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District

lauren@franklincountynrcd.org

802-582-3133

Lauren Weston, St. Albans, District Manager for the Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District. You may have seen me and my colleagues in the card room today. It has been an honor to hear the requests from others in the room and on zoom today, Vermont is truly a lucky place to have so many caring and dedicated individuals and organizations.

I am here to request support for a base budget of three million dollars for the Vermont Natural Resources Conservation Council in the Agency of Agriculture's budget, up from the 500 thousand dollars currently in the governor's budget for FY26.

I have been with the Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District, one of the 15 organizations that are impacted by the Natural Resources Conservation Council's budget, for the past four years and I have seen the incredible impact that the work of the Districts can do on the ground.

Last year, myself and my very small staff of 5 employees worked with over 110 farmers on efforts directly related to clean water, nutrient management, and economic viability; I have had the honor of working with farmers during some of their toughest and most vulnerable times, wondering what the future of their farm will be given the existing economic, climate, and public support conditions they are facing.

The work that Districts do deeply matters to our communities, and we need more support to keep ourselves afloat and functioning to serve our communities. As subdivisions of state government, mandated under Vermont State Statute to serve our communities, we are asking you to please support a base budget of three million dollars for the Vermont Natural Resources Conservation Council in the Agency of Agriculture's budget.