

FY26 Budget Public Hearing Testimony
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Hello, and thank you for taking the time to hear my testimony. My name is Sam Mayne, and I work for the Essex County Natural Resources Conservation District in Brunswick. I'm here to ask you to **please support a base budget of \$3 million for the Vermont Natural Resources Conservation Council in the Agency of Agriculture's budget.**

This base funding for the parent agency of the State's 14 Conservation Districts is a cost-efficient way to ensure that State and Federal programs reach the people in the state with the highest need. One example from my District is a stream restoration project, where I have been able to secure a \$1 million dollar federal grant and a \$200,000 dollar State Clean Water grant to replace a major culvert for the Town of Lunenburg, one of the lowest income communities in Vermont. This will provide the Town of Lunenburg with a flood-resilient stream crossing for the next 100+ years, restore fish passage, and improve water quality, all at a fraction of the cost to the State or town that would otherwise be required. This is just one of many examples across the state where Conservation Districts are the boots on the ground, connecting local communities to available programs to meet local needs and conservation priorities.

An increase in base funding could exponentially increase the impact of Conservation Districts in helping communities access available programs. **Again, please support a base budget of \$3 million for the Vermont Natural Resources Conservation Council in the Agency of Agriculture's budget.**