

My name is Sam Smith. I live in Charlotte and work for the Intervale Center as the Farm Business Director. I have provided farm business planning support to hundreds of farmers statewide over the last 12 years. I am here today to voice my support for the Vermont Food Security Roadmap to 2035, which is a plan to promote a robust, viable agricultural sector engaged in providing food for local communities. The priorities outlined in the Roadmap are essential to the community providers, farmers and partners engaged in the on-the-ground work of ensuring Vermonters have the food they need.

The priorities outlined in the Roadmap were developed with broad community involvement. Some of them involve state funding and they all work towards a unified goal of creating a food secure Vermont. They move us towards a community where all are fed, and farmers are able to earn enough to support their families. These priorities are all important for the push towards a just and equitable food system.

These priorities are:

- Fund the Vermont Foodbank's appropriations request for \$5 million
- Continue funding the Land Access and Opportunity Board so that it can perform its statutory powers and duties for improving land and housing access among historically marginalized and disadvantaged communities
- Appropriate \$20M for the Farm Security Fund to support emergency farm recovery from adverse weather events
- Convert \$323,000 in one-time funding for Vermont 211 to base funding and
- Increase the public investment in Crop Cash Plus and Farm Share to \$500,000 in base funding

All of the priorities I listed will have a profound impact on the health of our fellow Vermonters and the viability of the farms that are at the heart of our rural communities. They reinforce the resilience of a local food system that can weather the uncertainty of our current political moment and increasingly volatile impacts of climate change. These priorities are the conscious policy choices that feed our neighbors and strengthen our farmers. We are already on the road to food security in Vermont, and by funding our Coalition's priorities, you will move us further toward food security for everyone.

