Johanna Doren
Winooski, VT
johanna@nofavt.org
802-434-7162

Public Hearing on the Governor's Recommended Fiscal Year 2027 Budget
Re: Support $500,000 in ongoing funding for NOFA Vermont's Crop Cash (Plus) and Farm Share programs

My name is Johanna Doren, I live in Winooski, and I am the Local Food Access Director with the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT), where I oversee the Crop Cash (Plus) and Farm Share Programs. Thank you for listening to my testimony.

I am here to ask you to please support $500,000 in ongoing funding to strengthen Vermont farm viability and address food security by sustaining proven programs: Crop Cash (Plus) and Farm Share.

The Crop Cash and Farm Share Programs provide financial assistance to low-income Vermonters to buy fresh food directly from their local farmers. We are grateful to have received $450,000 in one-time funding in FY26 for Crop Cash, Crop Cash Plus, and Farm Share, which has allowed us to successfully maintain increased food security while directly supporting Vermont farmers. We need continued funding so that these proven programs can keep leveraging federal and philanthropic dollars, and continue supporting low-income Vermonters and farmers alike.

Over the last two years of receiving the State's support, these programs have leveraged around $1.6 million in local food purchases during that time. This season alone, we are on track to direct over $850,000 in revenue to Vermont farms through the Crop Cash, Crop Cash Plus, and Farm Share programs.

Crop Cash (Plus) and Farm Share are critical baseline programs that people rely on every week. The State of Vermont has shown it can be a leader in investing in vital food security programs, which have been pivotal during the fluctuations in federal policy, inflation, and weather events that impact food access. The State can count on this investment to be used for the best possible outcome for Vermonters.

Food security can and should be achieved for everyone who lives in Vermont. At the same time, we can support our farmers and ensure they can profit from growing food. Crop Cash (Plus) and Farm Share are proven programs that help Vermont achieve both of these goals. For these reasons, please support $500,000 in ongoing funding for NOFA Vermont's Crop Cash (Plus) and Farm Share programs, to strengthen farm viability and address food security. Thank you so much for your time.