

Budget- FY2027

Kelly Brown

Market Manager Brattleboro Area Farmers Market

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My name is Kelly Brown, and I live in Brattleboro, Vermont. I manage both the Summer and Winter Farmers Markets in Brattleboro, and serve as the administrator of SNAP/Crop Cash(+) at both markets.

Thank you to the Committee for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

I am writing to respectfully request that you appropriate \$500,000 in ongoing funding for FY2027 to support NOFA Vermont's food security programs: Crop Cash, Crop Cash PLUS, and Farm Share.

Through my work at the farmers markets, I see firsthand how powerful and effective these programs are for the people they serve.

Many of our regular customers have significant dietary sensitivities and must eat food grown without chemical fertilizers, insecticides, or made with preservatives. The stress of navigating limited grocery options while managing these sensitivities is profound. I have personally witnessed tears and visible relief when these folks discover their SNAP benefits can be matched, allowing them to afford the clean, untreated foods they need to stay healthy.

These programs stretch federal dollars, bringing additional resources into our local economy. They support Vermont farmers who are working hard to grow the very foods our communities need. Every dollar works twice: strengthening food access for vulnerable households while sustaining small agricultural businesses.

Without these programs, many shoppers would face exclusion from healthy locally grown food, and the farmers would face even greater financial strain. With them we build stronger public health, a more resilient local food system, and a more stable agricultural economy.

When making your budget decisions, please view these programs as efficient investments in Vermont's future. They are investments that yield measurable results for communities, farmers, and the state as a whole.

I respectfully urge you to appropriate \$500,000 in ongoing funding for FY2027 to support Crop Cash, Crop Cash PLUS, and Farm Share.

Thank you for your time, your service, and for considering this request.

Sincerely,
Kelly Brown
Brattleboro, Vermont