



Catherine Dimitruk, NRPC

President

Devon Neary, RRPC

Vice-President

Charlie Baker, CCRPC

Secretary/Treasurer

September 10, 2024

House Appropriations Committee
Senate Appropriations Committee
House Government Operations & Military Affairs Committee
Senate Government Operations Committee

RE: Reduction of Emergency Preparedness Funding in FY25

Dear Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees & Government Operations Committees:

On behalf of the state's 11 regional planning commissions (RPCs) I am writing to make you aware that during a period of increased natural disaster frequency and severity, the funding provided to RPCs through VEM by the Emergency Management Planning Grant (EMPG) Program has been cut by between 20 and 30 percent for the FY25 federal fiscal year. These cuts come on top of level funding since 2017-2018, meaning that from a functional perspective they exacerbate a real dollar decline in funding for the last 7 years. It is through this funding that regional planning commissions support municipal emergency planning, readiness and education, that we support and coordinate the Regional Emergency Management Committees, and through which we participate in state emergency planning and related exercises.

The cuts by VEM were prompted by a 10 percent federal cut to the EMPG program to the states, which has translated into a 20-30 percent cut in funding for Vermont's RPCs. This impacts both the scope of our work with municipalities, and how much time we can give to their needs. It is difficult to overstate the value the municipalities and the state derive from our direct, robust engagement with town officials who engage in emergency planning and preparedness. It's not just their Emergency Management Directors, but the unique disaster planning, response, and recovery frameworks that exist within each municipality. The relationships we develop have a direct bearing on our engagement with towns during disaster and recovery, and our ability to gather information and communicate it up to the state. We hope you agree this should not be undermined.

For this reason, **we are asking that our emergency preparedness funding be restored and increased by 10 percent in the Budget Adjustment Act** to account not only for the cut, but also our increase in costs of operation over seven years of level funding during a period characterized by high inflation.

Strengthening the Capability of Governments

www.vapda.org ~ tel. (802) 524-5958~ 75 Fairfield Street, St. Albans, VT 05478

Thank you for your consideration. I, or Catherine Dimitruk, are happy to answer any questions you might have, as is the Chair of VAPDA's Emergency Management Committee, Chris Company (ccampany@windhamregional.org; (802) 257-4547).

Sincerely,

Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charlie L Baker". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Charlie Baker
Treasurer and
Chair, VAPDA Government Relations Committee
On behalf of Chair, Catherine Dimitruk

Cc: Catherine Dimitruk, VAPDA Chair