



April 10, 2026

Dear Members of the Senate Committee On Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs,

We, the undersigned organizations, community leaders, and businesses, write to express our strong support for the proposed \$500,000 investment in Rural Technical Assistance (TA). This request is not the creation of a new program; it is a continued and intentional improvement to Vermont's Technical Assistance system based on the Vermont Evaluation of Rural Technical Assistance (VERTA), and lessons learned from proven efforts such as Municipal Technical Assistance Program (MTAP), Rural Economic Development Initiative, the Resilience Initiative for Vermont Empowerment and Recovery (RIVER) program and more. The Rural TA approach is a critical improvement for communities because it coordinates existing providers into a single, responsive system that helps rural towns navigate complexity, align with state priorities, and access the right expertise at the right time—avoiding duplication while strengthening what already works.

This investment offers a strong and measurable return for Vermont taxpayers. Rural TA focuses on early-stage capacity—project readiness, grant development, and coordinated support—where relatively modest investments can unlock millions in state, federal, and private funding that communities otherwise struggle to access. By helping towns move priority projects forward more efficiently, the program reduces costly delays, improves the success rate of public investments, and builds durable local capacity that persists beyond any single grant. In short, Rural TA is a high-leverage strategy that maximizes existing resources, accelerates community and economic development, and ensures Vermont's rural municipalities can fully participate in and benefit from statewide funding opportunities.

We respectfully urge the Committee to support this \$500,000 request.

Sincerely,

Municipal & Community Leaders:

Tina White, Athens
Sherry Maher, Athens
Nicolas Storellicastro, Barre City Manager
Danielle Owczarski, Barre
Gregory Barlow, Bradford Parks and Rec. Commission Chair
Stephen Brodeur, Bridport
Tricia Gordon, Bridport
Michael Strait, Brighton Town Manager
Judith C. Kurtz, Concord
June Bascom, Greensboro Association
JoAnn Hanowski, Greensboro
Kristen Leahy, Hardwick Town Administrator
Helen Beattie, Hardwick
Beth White, Highgate
Adrienne Parker, Johnson Selectboard Vice Chair
Paul Warden, Johnson Selectboard Chair (individual opinion)
Kathy Black, Johnson
Diana Osborn, Johnson
Patty Eisenhour, Londonderry Housing Commission Chair
Tracy Davidson, Lunenburg

Jessica Simonds, Lunenburg
Charlie Hancock, Montgomery Selectboard Chair
Jeff Pratt, New Haven
Richard Shappy, New Haven
Mike Tecca, New Haven
Jeanne Bright, Northfield
Susan Stillinger, Co-Chair, Northfield-Norwich Partnership
Marcella Eversole, Putney
Heather Holter, Roxbury Selectboard
Heidi Albright, Roxbury
Craig Sullivan, Roxbury
Lucinda Sullivan, Roxbury Planning Commission
Kristen Getler, Roxbury
Jon Cocina, Shelburne
Joe Kasprzak, St. Johnsbury Asst. Town Manager
Harmony Cism, Westford Town Administrator
Pam Kennedy, Westmore
Peggy Zimmer, Westmore
Jim Linville, Weston Selectboard
Geoffrey Brown, Weston Community Association
Kord Scott, Windham Selectboard Chair/Road Commissioner

TA Providers & Businesses:

Evan Carlson, Northeast Design Lab, Lyndon resident
Michael Cosco, Putney General Store, Putney resident
Ben Doyle, President, Preservation Trust of Vermont, Montpelier resident
Katy Emond, The Putney Place, Putney resident
Gretchen Havreluk, Community Consultant, Ingram & May, Jacksonville resident
Karen Horn, KB Horn LLC, Moretown resident
Dylan Kinsey, Kinsey Construction Inc., Albany resident
Everett McGinley, Treas., Cold Hollow to Canada, Inc., Montgomery resident
Lyssa Papazian, Historic Preservation Consulting, Putney resident
Rebecca Sanborn Stone, Community Workshop LLC, Bethel resident
Cynthia Stuart, Stuart Consulting, Concord resident
Leeann Wright, Director, Northwest Career & Technical Center, Highgate resident