

A consistent theme across the Agriculture & Ecosystems and Rural Resilience & Adaptation subcommittees is the need to increase our investments in flood resilience, and realize the myriad cobenefits those investments will yield. Flood resilience, which is achieved through the restoration and reforestation of floodplains, wetlands, and river corridors, right-sizing culverts to reduce infrastructure vulnerability, removing dams, incentivizing water storage through expansion of easements, among other efforts, is a critical climate strategy for Vermont. Leveraging ARPA funds to support flood resilience would have lasting, positive impacts for Vermont and Vermonters, and would meet the ARPA eligibility criteria as follows:

- Funding would be used for implementable projects that support both built and natural infrastructure, and could be allocated by the 2024 deadline.
- Low-income Vermonters are more likely to live in flood hazard areas (e.g. 12% of mobile homes in mobile home parks are located in floodplains versus 4% of single family homes).
- Given Vermont's historic settlement patterns, many of our villages and downtown centers – our towns' economic hubs – are located in or near flood hazard areas.

Strategic investments should be directed by using existing tools, like AOT's Transportation Resilience Planning Tool (TRPT) and culvert upgrade inventory and DEC's Functioning Floodplain Initiative.

Recommended ARPA investment: \$40-50 million

- Additional investment in Flood Resilient Communities Fund.