

Pathways for Adaptation and Building Resilience in Natural and Working Lands –

Pathway 3: Economies: Grow and connect local and sustainable natural and working lands' economies, markets, and food systems while ensuring and providing equitable access to said economies, markets, and food systems for Vermont's people

Strategy 1: Develop, expand, and sustain local markets specifically for food, agricultural, and forest products in ways that ensure food sovereignty and security and provide for all Vermont's peoples.

Strategy 3: Strengthen all aspects of working lands' supply chains and the associated infrastructure to support them.

The Agriculture and Ecosystem subcommittee benefited greatly from the recent extensive process of developing the Vermont Farm to Plate (F2P) Strategic Plan: 2021 – 2030. This is a valuable resource from a multi-stakeholder lens regarding how we might move forward to pursue a just and equitable agricultural economy. The F2P plan also confirms the need to prioritize our agricultural land base, infrastructure, and food security in order to increase Vermont farm and food system resilience to the impacts of climate change, and to ensure that all Vermonters, especially low-income residents, have access to healthy, local food. The past two years have demonstrated the fragility of our food system, and providing support for the development of the infrastructure to support the Vermont food system would increase food security to low-income Vermonters, and increase the economic stability of agricultural producers in the State who also support the soil health and riparian corridor protection that address other aspects of climate resilience.

We recommend that the State of Vermont significantly increase funding through an established program, like the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative, to support the necessary infrastructure investments and upgrades that will allow our working lands' sector to build out their production, processing, distribution, and logistical supply chain capacity. Specific need of \$10M exists in the meat slaughter and processing, value-added dairy processing, and distribution and storage capacity to increase producers access to in and out-of-state markets.