



# Working Lands Enterprise Fund: Investment for Transformative Impact

**The Vermont Working Lands Coalition strongly supports Governor Scott's recommendation that the legislature appropriate \$3.5 million to the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative in the FY22 Budget.**  
**(\$594K in base funding plus \$3 million in one-time funds)**

## **Working Lands Enterprise Board (WLEB) Mission:**

The Vermont WLEB unites state, non-profit and private sector leadership to invest in creative economic development in Vermont's working landscape by making essential, catalytic investments in critical leverage points of the Vermont farm and forest economy, from individual enterprises to industry sectors.

## **Act 142 – the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative**

The Vermont Working Lands Enterprise Investment Bill was passed by the legislature in 2012 and signed by Gov. Shumlin as Act 142. The bill created the Working Landscape Enterprise Fund and the Working Lands Enterprise Board, which oversees the Fund (Working Lands Enterprise Initiative). The initiative stimulates economic development in Vermont's agriculture and forest products sectors by systematically advancing entrepreneurship, business development, and job creation.

## **Investment Areas**

Grants directly support **working lands businesses** with investments in infrastructure, marketing, and research and development to develop new products, expand production and sales, and create jobs.

**Service provider** grants for technical assistance to help Vermont working lands businesses with: market development, marketing plans, and sales; business and financial planning; succession planning; access to capital; and manufacturing efficiencies.

*Vermont prospers and its unique sense of place thrives in large part because of intelligent investment in the people and enterprises that comprise its farm, food, and forest-based economy.*

## The Working Lands Enterprise Fund:

- Creates *jobs* in working lands enterprises
- Keeps *young entrepreneurs* in Vermont
- Builds *new markets* for value-added products
- Increases *capacity* for in-state production
- Leverages *more investment* for growing enterprises

## The Working Lands Enterprise Initiative Gets Results!

### To date:

- Funded **240** agriculture and forestry projects
- Distributed over **\$7** million in WLEF funding
- Leveraged **\$11** million in matching funds
- All **14** Vermont counties impacted!

### In just eight years, WLEF grantees:

- Created **524** new (FTE) jobs
- Employed **1015** people
- Impacted **19,721** acres
- Generated over **\$36** million in additional sales for the Vermont economy



### Working Lands Coalition Partners:

Cabot Creamery Cooperative | Center for an Agricultural Economy | NOFA Vermont | Preservation Trust of Vermont | Shelburne Farms | Vermont Association of Conservation Districts | Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies | Vermont Community Loan Fund | Vermont Council on Rural Development | Vermont Farm Bureau | Vermont Land Trust | Vermont Natural Resources Council | Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund and Farm to Plate | Vermont Woodland Association | Vermont Wood Works Council | The Woodstock Foundation