



TWO RIVERS-OTTAUQUECHEE

William B. Emmons, III, Chairman
Peter G. Gregory, AICP, Executive Director

REGIONAL COMMISSION

December 18, 2009

Martha Heath, Chair
House Appropriations Committee
115 State Street, Drawer 33
Montpelier, Vermont 05633

RE: Municipal Planning Grant Program

Dear Representative Heath:

I was sorry to learn about the confusion surrounding the funding and support of this program this past week.

Vermont's regional planning commissions (RPCs) strongly support the investments made by this program. We always have. I have testified repeatedly about the positive outcomes from these expenditures and how they improve local planning and regulatory understanding, streamline local permitting efforts and design and articulate a local land use policy that implements the land use goals found in 24 V.S.A., Section 4302. These are essential investments that have long term payouts that enhance our economy and improve the livability of our communities.

On behalf of the regional planning commissions, we respectfully request your consideration in retaining this source of funding in the current fiscal year and beyond. The RPCs have suggested to the Department to offer a "mini-grant" program of \$5,000-\$8,000 that can target smaller, discrete projects given that the appropriation level was reduced by 50% in FY 09. We request that you consider this as well.

Specific project priorities may include:

1. grants to convert local permitting to development review boards and the necessary bylaw changes to accomplish that.
2. grants to eliminate strip development enabled Town Plan land use **areas** and/or zoning bylaw **districts**, thereby conforming to the land use goals mentioned above.
3. grants for zoning bylaw amendments meeting the 2011 deadline for bylaw conformance to Town Plans.
4. grants to update expiring Town Plans.

Thank you for the opportunity to clarify our position on the importance of this investment. I would be pleased to talk more with you or the entire Committee if you wish.

Sincerely,

Peter G. Gregory, AICP
Executive Director

cc: Rep. Ann Manwaring, Rep. Mark Larson

3117 Rose Hill, The King Farm, Woodstock, VT 05091
802.457.3188, fax: 802.457.4728, www.trorc.org