

Town of Dorset, Vermont

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=====Chartered 1761=====

February 25, 2019

Theresa Utton-Jerman, House Appropriations Committee
Rebecca Buck, Senate Appropriations Committee

Re: Public Hearings on Governor's FY20 Budget – Written Testimony Rutland City Event

Dear Committee Members & Representatives,

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard as it relates to the proposed FY20 State Budget. This letter serves as written testimony with the Town of Dorset's reaction to the proposed budget.

Regional Planning Commission Support:

Dorset has worked with the Bennington County Regional Planning Commission (BCRC) on everything from road erosion review in advance of the clean water requirements to implementing changes to the Town Plan and Zoning Bylaw. The BCRC serves Dorset and our County admirably considering the patchwork of resources they have to bring in to fund operations.

Small Towns can't afford to keep an engineer or land use planner on staff. Dorset often encounters a diverse array of tasks that are small in scope. There are almost no private contractors in our part of the State that handle this type of work. The BCRC offers high quality affordable planning services that Towns simply couldn't live without.

The FY20 budget continues to under fund and under value this critical resource that Vermont communities need. Please consider fully funding as much as possible the RPC's from the Municipal and Regional Planning Fund.

Local Highway Support:

It's unfortunate to see a significant proposed cut to the support the State awards to towns to help defray the cost of maintaining roads and bridges. This cut will have a direct impact in the form of even poorer conditions on local roads and bridges.

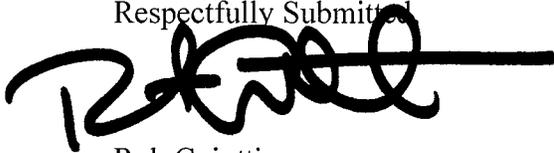
I've worked in local government for over 10 years, among State Agencies, the Agency of Transportation does perhaps the best job getting funds directly into projects that improve road conditions for residents and visitors.

Also during my tenure I believe the State has changed the Standards for Roads and Bridges at least 2-3 times, and things will change again to be aligned with the Municipal General Road Permit Requirements. The majority of our municipal budget already goes into maintaining our network of roads. I've yet to see a change to Road Standards that didn't increase the cost of maintaining roads. Under the latest iteration it's not uncommon to have hydraulics review tell us that the aging 4 foot culvert we want to replace should now become a 20 foot span bridge.

Somehow, in the face of additional State requirements the State wants to reduce funding to local communities. Please consider increasing the FY20 budget by 5% to maintain a level funded effort from the previous year.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this testimony.

Respectfully Submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Gaiotti', written over a horizontal line.

Rob Gaiotti
Town Manager