March 16, 2022

Senator Patrick Leahy
437 Russell Senate Bldg
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Vermont Huts and Hostels

Dear Senator Leahy,

I am pleased to share my support for the Vermont Huts and Hostels congressionally directed spending (CDS) request. Demand for outdoor recreation in Vermont has reached unprecedented levels, this project presents a rare opportunity to create a lasting impact on Vermonters and visitors to our Green Mountain State. Not only will the huts and hostels create new points of access to the outdoors for rural Vermonters, but they will also serve as strategic and affordable stopping points along the 485-mile Velomont Trail, intentionally traveling through 27 communities and creating the largest hut-supported trail system in the United States.

Congressionally directed spending was awarded for this initiative in 2022 for trail construction and hut planning in the Green Mountain National Forest. This FY 2023 request would leverage these funds by ensuring the timely build of essential hut and hostel infrastructure so users of various abilities can enjoy the hut-to-hut experience.

Notably, the construction of new recreation infrastructure - both in the frontcountry and backcountry – will help train and put Vermonters to work, and the maintenance of the finished trail and hut network will cultivate the next generation of outdoor stewards while creating positive economic impact on a community and statewide level. I have no doubt that the Vermont Huts and Hostels project will have a substantial positive impact on some of Vermont's most rural communities and help folks access and enjoy the beauty of our Green Mountain State.

I sincerely hope you will give the Vermont Huts and Hostels project your full consideration. This project is a win-win-win for Vermont citizens, visitors to our Green Mountain State, and the long-term stewardship of the land.

Sincerely,

Vermont Lieutenant Governor