

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

April 23, 2014

The Honorable Thomas Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

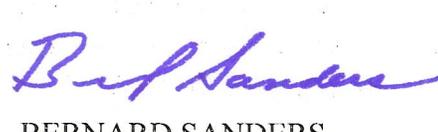
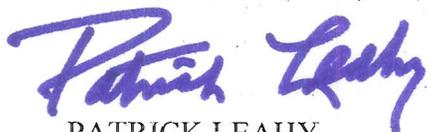
We are writing in support of Shelburne Farms and the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont's (NOFA-VT) application to the USDA Farm to School Support Services grant program. We are pleased to bring this proposal to your attention.

Shelburne Farms and the Northeast Organic Farming Association partnered together to form Vermont FEED (Food Education Every Day), a project focused on integrating healthy, local food, good nutrition, and the role of farms into the state's school food system. VT-FEED serves as the backbone organization for the coordination, communication and infrastructure connecting Farm to School (FTS) advocates across the state, while aiming to develop FTS programs in every Vermont community by 2020.

VT-FEED seeks funding to provide professional development and mentoring services to schools and nutrition professionals throughout New England, targeting districts with a high proportion of students participating in the Free Lunch program. VT-FEED continues to have high demand for its technical assistance via the annual FTS Institute and workshops to support school nutrition professionals. In 2013, VT-FEED successfully reached 800 school nutrition professionals in 40 schools, and impacted nearly 7,000 students. Continuing to invest in this type of professional development will help imbed FTS within school and existing community programs, creating a sustainable model or the future.

We believe this proposed project is very well suited for this grant program and we appreciate you giving the application the serious consideration it deserves. If we may be of any assistance or answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



PATRICK LEAHY
United States Senator

BERNARD SANDERS
United States Senator



PETER WELCH
United States Representative