



Vermont Rural Fire Protection Task Force

Vermont Association of Conservation Districts (VACD)
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November 9, 2017

Re: **Request for FY18 Appropriation, Vermont Rural Fire Protection Program**

Dear Board of Selectpersons, Town Clerks and Auditors:

On behalf of the Vermont Rural Fire Protection Task Force, I am writing to request your support of the Vermont Rural Fire Protection (RFP) Program, formerly called the Dry Hydrant Grant Program. The RFP program helps Vermont communities protect lives, property and natural resources by enhancing fire suppression resources. Program Manager and Engineering Technician Troy Dare helps local fire departments identify appropriate sites for dry hydrants and other rural water supply systems, design installations, and find financial support to support the costs of construction. During the **19 years** of the program, **1054 grants** totaling **\$2.32 million** have been provided to Vermont towns for installation of new rural fire protection systems, as well as for replacements and repairs.

Over the past several years, the Rural Fire Protection Program has made a successful transition from the Northern Vermont and George D. Aiken Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Councils to the Vermont Association of Conservation Districts (VACD). VACD is the membership association of Vermont's fourteen Natural Resources Conservation Districts, whose mission is to work with landowners and communities to protect natural resources and support the working landscape throughout the state.

We have made several adjustments to the Rural Fire Protection Grant Program in recent years, including changing the name from Dry Hydrant Grant Program to Rural Fire Protection Program to better reflect the diverse range of projects we support. In 2017 we increased the maximum grant award amount from \$4,000 to \$5,000 per project. New Rural Fire Protection systems along with repair, replacement, relocation, and upgrades of existing RFP systems are eligible for grant funding on an ongoing basis. In 2015 we began considering applications from Vermont towns and fire departments on a revolving basis throughout the year rather than just once a year. Please be on the look-out for the grant announcement post-card in March 2018.

The annual budget of the Rural Fire Protection Program is \$190,000 per year, \$110,000 of which is awarded in grants to Vermont communities for construction costs. The remaining budget covers site assessments, project design and program oversight. Most of our funding comes from the Vermont Department of Public Safety through annual appropriations by the Vermont Legislature. In addition, the

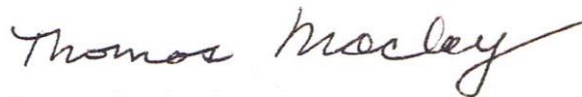
program receives support from the US Forest Service through the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. Unfortunately, these grants do not completely cover the costs of the program. Therefore, we are respectfully requesting that you include a \$100 appropriation in your 2018 town budget to support the Rural Fire Protection Program. Since last year's appropriation request, we have received almost **\$10,000** in town appropriations from almost **100** towns, with contributions still coming in. We are deeply grateful for this ongoing support.

214 Vermont communities have benefitted from the Rural Fire Protection program. Our goal is to extend this support to all Vermont towns and continue to assist local fire departments in reducing the risk of injury, loss of life, and damage to property and natural resources, thereby improving the safety and welfare of Vermont communities.

Enclosed please find a summary report of the Rural Water Supply Grant Program, as well as an invoice and W-9 from VACD in case it is required. Please feel free to contact me, Troy Dare, or Jill Arace, Executive Director of VACD, with any questions you may have. Our contact information is provided below. If you would like to receive this appropriation request by mail instead of by email, please contact Troy Dare.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Tom Maclay, Chair
Rural Fire Protection Task Force
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Troy Dare, Program Manager & contact person Town Appropriation business
Vermont Rural Fire Protection Program
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Rural Fire Protection Task Force Members:

Tom Maclay, Chair, Marshfield VFD
Bill Sanborn, Vice-Chair, Town of Maidstone
Bill Barry, Berlin VFD
Tess Greaves, Vermont Forest Parks & Recreation
Tyler Hermanson, VT Enhanced 9-1-1
Jenny Nelson, Senator Bernie Sanders' Office
Mike Greenia, Vermont Division of Fire Safety
Christine Kaiser, Kaiser Farm, Stowe VT