

Good Afternoon,

My name is Jordan Posner and I am the Executive Director of Champlain Islanders Developing Essential Resources, or CIDER. We are a South Hero based organization, who serves as the public transit provider in Grand Isle. Additionally, we provide meals on wheels, wellness programing, a durable equipment lending program, and a very successful home accessibility program, which to date has built over 200 ramps over the past decade, all with volunteer labor, all in humble Grand Isle County.

Those that know that small but mighty communities in Grand Isle County are fully aware of the community spirit of self-reliance and resiliency. Its long been mantra in the islands that its unlikely that anyone is coming to help our little islands and we better learn to provide for ourselves. Out of that spirit came CIDER in 1993. Founded in the basement of the Congregational Church on South Street in South Hero, the organization has grown into a nationally and state recognized community organization. The only transit provider in Vermont to win the Community Transportation Association of America's Transit System of the Year award, and winner of the governor's award of outstanding community service and the AHS secretary's community award, CIDER is well respected outside of Grand Isle County. Widely considered the heart of our little Island communities, CIDER is known for its ability to quickly adapt to changing environments while high quality services to our neighbors, services that would often not exist without CIDER.

I come before the committee today to highlight not just the role that public transit providers like CIDER play in our Vermont

communities, but the role non profits in general play in the provision of services for our neighbors.

Non-Profits like CIDER are the lifeblood of our community. We provide services, often required by state statute, in an efficient and cost-effective manner, while also being able to respond to community needs in a way that State Government often cant. We can serve our communities in the way these services are intended, without the bureaucracy and burdens too often found in government. We achieve the goals intended by these statutes.

It has long been a sense of pride for me, CIDERs board and members, that we have a staff composed almost exclusively of Grand Isle County residents, allowing us to keep money in our communities. Additionally, CIDER is proud that it is able to offer a service and benefit at an hourly rate lower than any other public transit provider in the state. We are proud to employ 25 hard working and community driven neighbors who go above and beyond for their communities. But we are not unique, there are Non Profits in every nook and cranny of Vermont that are driving economies while keeping Vermonters healthy, safe, and thriving.

But like so many you have heard from over the past few years, the cost of business just keeps increasing, the pots of money that is used to fund programs like the O&D program keep getting smaller, and we are having to fight harder for less. In just the match component of the O&D program, CIDER has seen an 1566% increase since 2024, with a 0% increase in federal dollars and an 182% increase in costs and 117% increase in ridership. As CIDER continues to do what it thinks is best for its neighbors, we are

increasingly doing it with less and competing with others for an ever shrinking pot of funds.

This is not a problem that exists just in transportation, as we are seeing in all aspects of the work we do and we hear it from Non Profits across the State, and more broadly the Nation. Common Good, a fantastic membership organization that advocates on behalf of Vermont's non-profits, that employ 1 in 5 Vermonters, is in need as well and asking the State to allocate funds for technical assistance, grant making, and capacity building.

If non-profits like CIDER are unable to continue to make ends meet, the people of Grand Isle County will be left without any backup. CIDER is the only transportation option, the only wellness entity, and the majority provider of meals on wheels in our little communities. Far too often, the voices of the 7,500 hearty Grand Islers are drowned out by the voices in our neighbors in Franklin and Chittenden counties, and thus local non profits like CIDER are vital to ensure that they are not left behind and Grand Isle County wouldn't have it any other way. A people often too proud to ask for help, are here today to ensure that we, and Vermonters like us, are not forgotten and that Non Profits in Vermont are able to continue doing the fine work of providing services for our neighbors.