

March 31, 2014

Dear AASHE STARS Program Staff,

I am submitting this letter to affirm that Climate Solutions New England (CSNE) should qualify for Innovation Credit through the STARS programs of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. CSNE is an initiative of the University of New Hampshire Sustainability Institute and is lead by faculty and staff from the Sustainability Institute and the University of New Hampshire.

I am the director of the regional planning agency covering Southeastern section of New Hampshire, including all of the direct coastal communities. These municipalities are beginning to respond to the implications on climate change by adapting regulations and planning procedures to account for changing conditions and particularly elevated flood risk. Much of the impetus for these local changes has come climate assessments made “real” to this region through the work of CSNE and the incorporation of localized climate science into the New Hampshire Climate Action Plan.

CSNE is one of a small handful of innovation enablers in New Hampshire that has allowed the State and some of its municipalities to do their own innovative work responding to climate change. Three examples of CSNE’s critical work stand out in my mind:

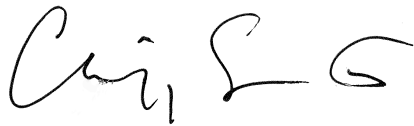
- NH Climate Action Plan: As a provider of critical science based information (based on downscaled climate modeling) about likely impacts of climate change specific to New Hampshire, CSNE was an essential participant in, and contributor to, the development of New Hampshire’s highly innovative Climate Action Plan in 2009.
- Lamprey Future 100 Year Flood Study: CSNE again played the central role in undertaking this highly innovative study which, for the first time I know of, combined climate change projections regarding storm frequency and intensity and changes in land use and impervious surfaces and combined them with a vastly improved terrain model of the region to project “future” flood levels of a 100 Year (1% probability) in the Lamprey River Watershed. The unique application of this science has provided a basis for communities in that watershed to proactively adjust land use and building regulations to adapt to a changing climate.
- Regional Climate Assessment: CSNE has developed three regionally-specific climate assessment reports for New Hampshire: for the Piscataqua/Great Bay region (2011), for Southern New Hampshire (2014) and for the North Country region (2014). The information in these reports are providing the basis for climate change and adaptation planning findings and recommendations in regional plans being developed by the NH RPCs under the national Sustainable Communities Initiative. These plans will in turn provide guidance to municipalities in becoming more reliant

to future natural hazards caused in part by climate change -- including changes to planning and development policies, building standards and overall preparedness.

The common strain in all three examples is CSNE's innovative approach in marrying science, modeling and assessment to create useful information that informs and guides policymakers. As such, I believe that this program strongly qualifies for inclusion as an Innovation Credit through the AASHE STARS' program.

Please feel free to contact me if you need more information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cliff Sinnott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Cliff" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Sinnott".

Cliff Sinnott
Executive Director