

RURALWORKS PARTNERS Impact Report 2024



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Letter from the Team	4
Mission and Approach	5
Investments at a Glance	6
Impact Highlights	7
Portfolio Company Spotlights American Unagi EarthOptics Glavel TimberHP	9 11 13 15
Glavel Impact Story	17
Looking Ahead: 2025 & Beyond	21
Investor & Partner Reflections	22
Acknowledgements	23
Appendix	25



Executive Summary

RuralWorks Partners is an impact investment fund dedicated to scaling businesses in rural America that are driving climate solutions and creating quality jobs. Our mission is rooted in the belief that economic prosperity and environmental sustainability are not mutually exclusive they're fundamentally linked. In this first annual impact report, we share how our portfolio, which spans diverse sectors, geographies, and business sizes, demonstrates the power of rural innovation. Each investment reflects our commitment to building a rural economy that works for both people and the planet.

Our focus is on generating environmental, economic, and social returns, and we firmly believe that rural regions are critical to the climate transition.

We are proud to partner with visionary founders and communities, building a rural economy that is as resilient as it is sustainable.

Investment Timeline

2023

TimberHP

Sustainable manufacturing using forest byproducts to produce insulation

American Unagi

Sustainable, traceable aquaculture with rural job creation

2024

American Unagi Follow-on investment

EarthOptics

Precision soil mapping that helps farmers reduce input costs, chemical usage and monetize soil carbon

Glavel

Circular economy solution turning waste glass into high-performance insulation

\$10.5M

Deployed across four companies



Letter from the team

Dear Friends and Partners,

As we reflect on 2024, we are filled with gratitude for the partnerships, progress, and purpose that defined our year. From investing in innovative solutions addressing climate challenges to supporting rural communities with quality jobs, our work this year reaffirmed the importance of our focus and mission.

Looking ahead to 2025, we remain committed to deepening our impact, fostering collaboration, and embracing new opportunities to drive meaningful change.

Thank you for being an integral part of this journey. We look forward to deepening our engagement with rural communities and enhancing our collective impact.

Warmly, Skip, Louisa, Andria & Ryan





Mission and Approach



Our Mission

At RuralWorks, we invest in growthstage rural businesses that are advancing environmental sustainability and building community wealth.

Our Strategy

Rural Prosperity

We focus on businesses in rural communities, creating quality jobs with living wages, benefits, and opportunities for wealth-building.

Climate Solutions

Each investment supports technologies or products that mitigate climate change—whether by sequestering carbon, diverting waste, reducing emissions, or enhancing local food systems.

Inclusive Capital

We tailor investment structures to meet companies where they are offering flexibility through the use of appropriate equity and debt structures.



Investments at a Glance



<u>AVE</u>

Circular Economy & Recycled Materials

Agriculture Technology & Soil Health

EARTHOPTICS



Impact Highlights

Environmental impacts across the portfolio

Glass powder kept out of landfill in in 2024.

Equivalent to 6,040,000 wine bottles or 14,764,444 beer bottles.



2.5M acres of farmland

3,322

tons of

powder

glass

Farmland monitored for soil health.

Equivalent to about 3,900 square miles or the size of Rhode Island and Delaware put together.



10,000 tons of wood chips Wood chips preserved and carbon stored.

Equal to taking 2,200 passenger cars off the road for a year or the carbon absorbed by ~11,000 acres of U.S. forests for one year.



20 MT of CO₂ Saved by not shipping eels from the United States to China and back again.

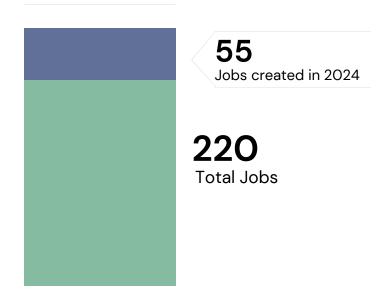
Equivalent of driving an average gasoline car ~50,000 miles or driving around the Earth twice.

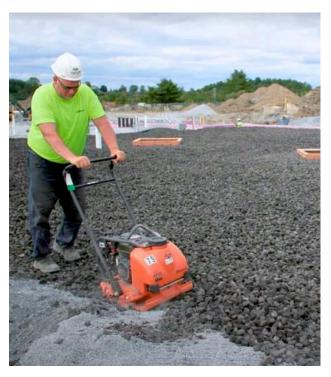




Economic & social impacts across the portfolio

Portfolio Metrics





Employee Benefits Snapshot

59% of Employees Paid a Living Wage* 50%

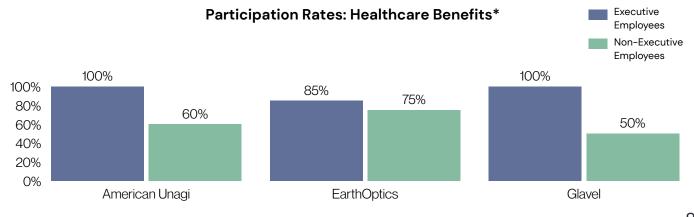
of Governance Boards with Gender Diversity

100%

have access to 401(k) or wealth-building programs

\$250

average 401(k) savings per month*



*excluding TimberHP which did not report through Tablecloth



Spotlight: American Unagi

Sustainable Aquaculture

RuralWorks provided \$3M in growth capital to Mainebased American Unagi via a Convertible Note. As the first commercial-scale eel farm in the U.S., raising wildcaught Maine eels, the company offers a sustainable and fully traceable alternative to imported eel. American Unagi shortens the supply chain, ensures animal welfare, and reduces environmental impact.

Job Creation

Bringing year-round employment to rural coastal Maine, including roles in aquaculture operations, processing, and logistics.

13	Total jobs at year end
0	Employees added in 2024
62%	% Paid a living wage (of max, 16)
100%	% Rural-based workforce

Gender Breakdown

Across entire employee base at max



Located in Waldoboro, ME



"We're proving that sustainable aquaculture can thrive in rural America — creating jobs, protecting natural resources, and supporting local economies all at once."

— Sara Rademaker, Founder & President, American Unagi





American Unagi's Impact Focus



Sustainable Food Systems

Displacing an exploitative global supply chain with a traceable, lower-impact domestically grown and harvested eel.



Cultural Collaboration

Partnering with a local Tribe to support traditional glass eel harvesting while ensuring ecological integrity.



Energy Resilience

Powered in part by solar energy, minimizing reliance on fossil fuels.

UN SDGs



- Strengthens sustainable aquaculture and local food supply
- Provides quality employment in rural Maine
- U.S.-based eel aquaculture innovation
- Reduces food miles and reduces overfishing of wild eels

IRIS+ Metrics



Ol1471 Quality jobs created or retained.



PD5752 Rural operations or jobs.



OI8831 / OI3437 Sustainable or healthier products.



OI2849 Sustainable resource / community benefits.



Spotlight: EarthOptics

Soil Health

RuralWorks invested \$3 million in a Convertible Note raised by Minnesota-headquartered EarthOptics, a soil data company that measures and quantifies soil health. Its vertically integrated platform—combining field sampling, remote sensing, and lab testing—delivers actionable insights into the biological, chemical, and physical characteristics of soil, helping customers improve profitability and sustainability in land management.

High-Tech Job Creation

Employs field technicians and data analysts across rural communities, expanding access to the innovation economy.

136	Total jobs at year end
47	Employees added in 2024
na	% Paid a living wage (distributed)
>50%	% Rural-based workforce

Gender Breakdown

Across entire employee base at max



Distributed rural workforce



"EarthOptics is building the soil data platform to support a future with healthier and more productive soils. We're giving farmers, ranchers, and the agrifood supply chain the tools to understand how soil health can unlock profitability and sustainability, together."

> -Lars Dyrud, CEO, EarthOptics



EARTHOPTICS



EarthOptics' Impact Focus



Soil Health, Climate Impact

Enables carbon sequestration through improved soil management, helping farmers access verified carbon credits.



Economic Efficiency for Farmers

Reduces reliance on fertilizers and inputs — lowering costs while improving productivity.



Inclusive Business Ownership

Partner Accelerator Program supports field techs transition from employees to business owners, promoting entrepreneurship.

UN SDGs

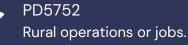


- Supports farmer profitability and soil health, contributing to resilient food systems
- Creates tech and field jobs across 30+ states
- Uses advanced tech for soil mapping and monitoring
- Helps farmers reduce fertilizer and input use
- Reduces emissions through precision agriculture
- Enhances soil health and land regeneration

IRIS+ Metrics



Ol1471 Quality jobs created or retained.





OI8831 / OI3437 Sustainable or healthier products.



OI2849 Sustainable resource / community benefits.



PI3687 Reduces input-driven emissions.

019414



Expanding soil services and platforms to farmers nationally.



Spotlight: Glavel

Circular Economy & Construction

RuralWorks invested \$1.5M in the Series A Preferred Equity round of Vermont-based Glavel. Glavel transforms recycled glass into foam glass gravel — a lightweight, durable, and insulating material used in sustainable construction. By diverting waste glass from landfills and producing domestically without fossil fuels, Glavel offers a circular, climate-forward solution that replaces more carbon-intensive building materials.

Job Creation

Creating skilled manufacturing jobs in Vermont, with living wages and benefits.

16	Total jobs at year end
2	Employees added in 2024
41%	% Paid a living wage (of max, 17)
100%	% Rural-based workforce

Gender Breakdown

Across entire employee base at max



Located in Essex, VT



"Glavel started as an opportunity to make our mark on the circular economy by transforming recycled glass into a highly sought-after building material. Our mission expanded to prioritize low-embodied carbon manufacturing and social impact hiring. We are committed to making a positive impact on the planet and the communities we serve."

-Rob Conboy, Founder & CEO Glavel





Glavel's Impact Focus



Circular Economy Champion

Over 3,322 tons of glass powder diverted from landfills and reused in green construction projects.



Low-Carbon Manufacturing

Powered entirely by renewable electricity — Glavel's production is 100% fossil fuel free.



Equitable Hiring

Partners with a mission-driven staffing agency, to provide employment opportunities to individuals overcoming barriers to workforce entry.

UN SDGs



- Offers inclusive hiring and quality jobs in Vermont
- Recycles glass waste into building materials
- Provides circular, low-carbon building products
- Diverts glass from landfills
- Produces carbon-negative materials

IRIS+ Metrics



Quality jobs created or retained. PD5752

OI1471

Rural operations or jobs.



OI8831 / OI3437 Sustainable or healthier products.



OI2849 Sustainable resource / community benefits.



OI3758 Diverts Vermont glass from landfills.

PI3687

Produces carbon-negative foam glass.



Spotlight: TimberHP

Green Building Materials

RuralWorks invested \$3M through a SAFE in Mainebased TimberHP. The company manufactures highperformance wood fiber insulation using leftover wood chips that would otherwise decompose and release greenhouse gases or contribute to wildfire risk. By transforming this biomass into a renewable, carbonsequestering alternative to traditional insulation, TimberHP supports rural economies, creates manufacturing jobs, and advances sustainable building materials.

Job Creation

Provides stable, well-paying manufacturing jobs in rural Maine with full benefits.

55	Total jobs at year end
6	Employees added in 2024
75%	% Paid a living wage*
100%	% Rural-based workforce

Gender Breakdown

Across entire employee base at max



*TimberHP did not report through Tablecloth

Located in Madison, ME



"We're bringing the next generation of sustainable building insulation to the market that's great for people, great for Maine, and great for the planet — all with underutilized renewable resources in our backyard."

-Matthew O'Malia, Co-Founder, President & CEO, TimberHP





TimberHP's Impact Focus



Climate-Forward Manufacturing

Products sequester carbon and replace fiberglass insulation, which is energy-intensive and hazardous to installers.



Revitalizing Rural Infrastructure

Operating out of a shuttered mill, TimberHP is catalyzing economic recovery in a former paper town.



Sustainable Supply Chain

Uses local wood chip byproducts that would otherwise emit greenhouse gases if left to rot.

UN SDGs



- Creates rural manufacturing jobs
- Innovates with renewable building materials.
- Produces healthier building insulation
- Repurposes wood waste
- Sequesters carbon and avoids GHGs
- Supports sustainable forestry

IRIS+ Metrics

011471



Quality jobs created or retained.

PD5752 Rural operations or jobs.



OI8831 / OI3437 Sustainable or healthier products.



OI2849 Sustainable resource / community benefits.



OI3758 10,000 tons of wood chips repurposed.



PI3687 <u>10,000+ tons CO</u>2 avoided

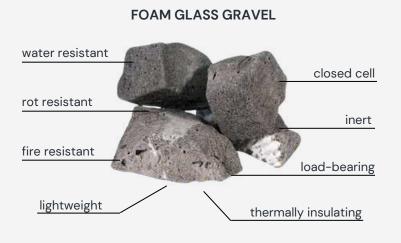
Note: TimberHP filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in March 2025, after the close of our reporting period,. We remain 16 optimistic about the company's future. TimberHP continues to employ 55+ individuals in rural Maine, and we believe the impact generated in 2024 will endure and expand as the company charts a path forward.



Glavel Impact Story

Transforming Waste Glass into a Climate Solution

A Vermont-based startup is changing the way we think about waste and construction. Glavel is at the forefront of transforming recycled glass into foam glass gravel, a sustainable, high-performance building material that offers both environmental and economic benefits.



Glass Waste In the USA

The United States generates millions of tons of glass waste annually, yet much of it ends up in landfills due to contamination or inefficiencies in recycling systems. Estimates indicate that as little as 33% of glass sent to be recycled in the US actually gets recycled, much lower than many European countries who recycle as much as 80% of glass⁽¹⁾.

The Carbon Impact of Construction

Emissions associated with the production and construction of building materials in the U.S. are estimated to be up to 370 million tons of CO2e annually, equivalent to about 6% of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions per year⁽²⁾. The construction industry remains one of the largest contributors to carbon emissions, heavily reliant on both fossil fuel-intensive production and fossil fuel-heavy materials such as concrete and polystyrene foam insulation.

Embodied Carbon

Embodied carbon refers to the CO2 emissions generated throughout a product's lifecycle—from raw material extraction to manufacturing, transportation, and disposal. In construction, materials like cement and steel have high embodied carbon due to their energy-intensive production. Reducing embodied carbon helps lower environmental impact before a building is even used.



Glavel Genesis: A European Technology

Glavel's journey began with a simple and powerful idea: transform recycled glass into something valuable. While visiting Germany in 2016, Rob Conboy, Founder and CEO of Glavel, was introduced to foam glass gravel and immediately knew it was a solution to address decarbonization and shortcomings in the American recycling system by turning recycled glass into a highly sought after building material.

Glavel's foam glass gravel is made from 100% recycled glass and processed using renewable energy sources.

This innovative material offers multiple advantages:

- Sustainability: A low embodied carbon alternative to traditional polystyrene insulation and aggregate materials.
- Performance: Lightweight yet durable, providing insulation and drainage benefits.
- Versatility: Perfect for residential, commercial, and infrastructure projects that focus on energy efficiency and sustainability.

Unlike traditional insulation and aggregate production which rely on fossil fuel-powered kilns, Glavel's facility operates entirely on renewable energy sources. This approach reduces emissions and also sets a new standard for decarbonizing manufacturing in the construction industry.



Foam Glass Gravel

Foam glass gravel has been utilized in Europe for over 30 years, with production facilities established in countries like Switzerland and Germany since the 1980s. Manufacturers such as Misapor have contributed to its widespread adoption across more than 30,000 projects, emphasizing its role in sustainable construction.



Social & Community Impact: Building a Better Workforce

Glavel's operations support rural economic growth by creating high-quality jobs in rural Vermont and strengthening local supply chains. As the demand for sustainable construction materials rises, Glavel's model has the potential to scale nationwide, bringing more jobs and sustainable solutions to communities across the country.

Second-Chance Hiring: A Workforce with Purpose

One of Glavel's strongest commitments is to second chance hiring. The company intentionally seeks out individuals who have faced significant barriers to employment, offering meaningful opportunities for those rebuilding their lives. In doing so, Glavel not only strengthens its workforce but also generates lasting social impact—fostering stability, career growth, and community reintegration.

One Glavel employee shared:

"This job gave me a second chance when I needed it the most. Working at Glavel has been more than just a paycheck—it's a fresh start and a place where I feel valued."





Environmental Impact

The environmental benefits of Glavel's foam glass gravel go beyond just its use in construction. By replacing traditional, fossil fuel-intensive materials, Glavel helps builders meet energy efficiency goals and significantly reduce their carbon footprints.

Glavel's commitment to sustainability extends beyond its products to its manufacturing process. Unlike traditional insulation and aggregate production, which often relies on fossil fuels, Glavel's facility operates entirely without them. Instead, the company currently uses 82% renewable energy sources to minimize the carbon impact. This approach not only reduces emissions but also sets a new standard for ecofriendly manufacturing in the construction industry.

19



RuralWorks' Investment

"Glavel represents everything we look for in an investment—innovation, sustainability, and real impact on people's lives. By combining environmental responsibility with social good, they are proving that business success and positive change can go hand in hand."

– Louisa Schibli, Director of Impact & Engagement of RuralWorks Partners

Glavel's partnership with RuralWorks has helped accelerate its growth, providing the resources needed to expand operations, create more jobs, and scale impact. The company is now better positioned to meet rising demand for sustainable building materials.

"Having RuralWorks as an investor is a game-changer. They understand our mission, believe in our people, and are helping us reach new heights. Their support goes beyond capital—it's a true partnership in building a better future." – Rob Conboy, CEO of Glavel

As Glavel scales its operations, the company is focused on expanding its production capacity and increasing adoption within the mainstream and green building markets. By investing in companies like Glavel, RuralWorks is helping to build a cleaner, more resilient economy—one that values people, the planet, and long-term prosperity.

Follow the link for more information.





2025 & Beyond

As we look toward 2025 and beyond, RuralWorks remains committed to building resilient, inclusive economies in rural America — rooted in sustainability, job quality, and long-term prosperity.

Meeting the Moment in a Challenging Market

While 2024 presented challenges — from macroeconomic volatility to political uncertainty — it also reinforced the need for patient, values-aligned capital. Climate-smart, community-driven businesses are gaining momentum, and rural innovators continue to lead with solutions rooted in place and purpose.

We're confident that RuralWorks' approach — investing in businesses that are climate-positive and community-anchored — is more important than ever.

What's Ahead in 2025

We're setting bold, yet grounded, goals for the year ahead in 2025.

PROJECTS	DETAILS
Deal Execution	• Deploy \$10–12 million in 3-4 new portfolio companies
Portfolio Management	 Support 1–2 follow-on investments to scale growth and deepen impact
Impact Commitment	 Create or sustain 50+ jobs in rural communities Expand our co-investor network to unlock more capital for rural climate solutions



Reflections

Why Our Partners Believe in RuralWorks:

We asked our investors, advisory council members, and portfolio company founders to reflect on what sets RuralWorks apart — and how our partnership has made a difference.

"Investing in RuralWorks aligns with our mission to support sustainable growth in rural America. We're proud to be part of an initiative that fosters innovation, creates quality jobs, and accelerates capital deployment in the communities we serve."

- David Dornbirer, Vice President Mission Investments, CoBank

"RuralWorks is helping reshape what inclusive, climate-aligned capital looks like in communities that have historically been overlooked. Their disciplined approach to impact and their support for founders sets a high bar."

- John Pion, Director, Impact Investments, Social Finance

"Making a commitment to RuralWorks behalf of fundholders at the Vermont Community Foundation has allowed us to invest philanthropic capital support high quality jobs and sustainable enterprises in Vermont. The ability of the team at RuralWorks to identify promising rural businesses with strong community and climate impacts is well-aligned with our mission investment strategy and our focus on addressing the ongoing opportunity gap in Vermont."

- Dan Smith, President & CEO, Vermont Community Foundation

"RuralWorks---helps to bridge the gap of rural businesses' access to capital. RW facilitates entrepreneurship and community with targeted investment in companies and people whose values align with ours."

- Pat Reinhardt, Advisory Council Member

"RuralWork's support beyond capital has been incredible. Where to start? Strategic guidance-specifically around financing strategy, updated modeling, and helping improve our admin with networking to a great fractional CFO."

- Sara Rademaker, Founder & CEO, American Unagi

"We're looking to expand our sales and marketing team. RuralWorks connected us with a consulting resource to help identify the current gaps in our teams' talents and skills. This will guide our hiring strategy."

- Robert Conboy, Founder & CEO, Glavel

"RuralWorks has been a great partner to EarthOptics. They aren't afraid to get their hands dirty and understand the challenges that startup companies face. They bring energy and empathy as an investor and partner to our company."

- Lars Dyrud, CEO, EarthOptics

We thank you for your ongoing support

Acknowledgements

This work isn't possible without the commitment and belief of our broader community.

To our investors — thank you for choosing to align your capital with impact. Your partnership enables us to invest in rural businesses that are shaping a more sustainable and equitable economy.

To our Advisory Council — your insights, networks, and encouragement have been invaluable. Special thanks to Pat Reinhardt, whose deep expertise and steady presence continue to ground our work.

To our portfolio company founders and teams — you are the heart of this report. Your ingenuity, grit, and vision inspire us every day. Thank you for building where others overlook, for leading with purpose, and for trusting us to walk alongside you.

To our impact measuring and monitoring partner, Tablecloth — your thoughtful, flexible approach has helped us more deeply understand the real-time social and environmental outcomes of our investments. We're grateful for your collaboration and care in helping us measure what matters.

To our partners in the field — from technical assistance providers and fellow investors to ecosystem builders and mission-aligned collaborators, thank you for sharing deal flow, supporting our portfolio companies, and pushing the field forward with a shared commitment to environmental and social impact.

To our Board — thank you for your ongoing support and governance as we continue to build RuralWorks.

We're excited to continue this journey together!



RuralWorks Partners, LLC Offices in MN and VT <u>www.ruralworkspartners.com</u> louisa@ruralworkspartners.com



Appendix

Tablecloth and Living Wage Methodology

RuralWorks Partners relies on Tablecloth's Living Wage methodology to assess and report on the impact of our portfolio companies on local communities. Tablecloth is a technology platform and service provider that helps impact funds and their portfolio companies measure social, environmental, and community impact. Their Living Wage methodology is based on the MIT Living Wage Calculator, which estimates the income necessary for workers to meet basic living standards in their specific geographic area. Tablecloth calculates a weighted average of living wage data for households with varying numbers of earners and dependents, using U.S. Census data to determine the appropriate weights for each household type. This method ensures that our impact reporting is based on geographically specific, data-driven assessments of what constitutes a living wage in each county where our portfolio companies operate. Learn more at <u>Tablecloth.io</u>.

USDA Definition of Rural

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines rural areas based on geographic and population criteria. According to the USDA, rural areas are typically those that are outside of urbanized areas and urban clusters, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. These areas generally have a population of fewer than 50,000 people and are often characterized by lower population density and a reliance on agriculture or natural resources. The USDA's definition is crucial for determining eligibility for various federal programs aimed at supporting rural development, including funding and services for economic growth, infrastructure, and community sustainability.



UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



- American Unagi: Strengthens sustainable aquaculture and local food supply.
- EarthOptics: Supports farmer profitability and soil health, contributing to resilient food systems.





Glavel: Offers inclusive hiring and quality jobs in Vermont.TimberHP: Creates rural manufacturing jobs.

American Unagi: Provides quality employment in rural Main
EarthOptics: Creates tech and field jobs across 30+ states.

- American Unagi: Provides quality employment in rural Maine.
- EarthOptics: Uses advanced tech for soil mapping and monitoring.
- Glavel: Reindustrializes Vermont glass waste into building material.
- TimberHP: Innovates with renewable building materials.

Glavel: Provides circular, low-carbon building products.

TimberHP: Produces healthier building insulation





- American Unagi: U.S.-based eel aquaculture innovation.
- EarthOptics: Helps farmers reduce fertilizer and input use.
- Glavel: Diverts glass from landfills.
 - TimberHP: Repurposes wood waste.



- American Unagi: Reduces food miles and pressures on wild stocks.
- EarthOptics: Reduces emissions through precision ag.
- Glavel: Produces carbon-negative materials.
- TimberHP: Sequesters carbon and avoids GHGs.



• American Unagi: Advances sustainable aquaculture and reduces overfishing of wild eels.



- EarthOptics: Enhances soil health and land regeneration.
- TimberHP: Supports sustainable forestry.



IRIS+ Metrics

American Unagi

- OI1471: Quality jobs created or retained.
- PD5752: Rural operations or jobs.
- 1 OI8831 / OI3437: Sustainable or healthier products.
- Y OI2849: Sustainable resource/community benefits.

EarthOptics

- 🔄 PI3687: Reduces input-driven emissions.
- 🖄 OI9414: Expanding soil services and platforms to farmers nationally.
- Ol1471: Quality jobs created or retained.
- PD5752: Rural operations or jobs.
- 1 OI8831 / OI3437: Sustainable or healthier products.
- Y Ol2849: Sustainable resource/community benefits.

Glavel

- 🕤 OI3758: Diverts Vermont glass from landfills.
- 🔄 PI3687: Produces carbon-negative foam glass.
- OI1471: Quality jobs created or retained.
- PD5752: Rural operations or jobs.
- 1 OI8831 / OI3437: Sustainable or healthier products.
- Y OI2849: Sustainable resource/community benefits.

TimberHP

- 🕤 OI3758: 10,000 tons of wood chips repurposed.
- PI3687: 10,000+ tons CO₂ avoided.
- OI1471: Quality jobs created or retained.
- PD5752: Rural operations or jobs.
- 1 OI8831 / OI3437: Sustainable or healthier products.
- Y OI2849: Sustainable resource/community benefits.