



**STATE OF VERMONT**  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE  
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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**MEMORANDUM**

To: Representative Diane Lanpher, Chair, House Committee on Appropriations

From: Representative Michael Marcotte, Chair, House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development

Date: January 26, 2023 - **DRAFT**

Subject: House Commerce recommendations on Governor's proposed FY23 BAA

The House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development appreciates the opportunity to review and provide recommendations on the provisions of the Governor's proposed fiscal year 2023 budget adjustment act that fall under the policy jurisdiction of this Committee. In response to your request, the Committee reviewed the Governor's proposals and ranked each based on priority. In some cases, the Committee also proposed revised language or provided additional comments on a funding proposal or associated program, and the Committee proposed one additional new section. The Committee did not weigh in on a few technical proposals.

***Sec. 1, 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 185, Sec. B.1100(a)(24); Rural Infrastructure Assistance Program (\$3,000,000) – High Priority***

The Committee supports the proposal in the amount specified and ranks it as a high priority. The Committee does, however, recommend changes to the Program as proposed in Sec. 7 of the BAA and has provided revised language for that section below.

***Sec. 1, 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 185, Sec. B.1100(a)(28); State match for NTIA broadband grant (Middle Mile) (\$30,000,000) – High Priority***

The Committee supports the proposal in the amount specified and ranks it as a high priority.

***Sec. 1, 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 185, Sec. B.1100(a)(29); Employment Supports for New Americans (\$350,000) – High Priority***

The Committee supports the proposal in the amount specified and ranks it as a high priority. The Committee does, however, recommend changes to the Program as proposed in Sec. 10 of the BAA and has provided revised language for that section below.

***Sec. 1, 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 185, Sec. B.1100(a)(32); Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP) (\$5,000,000) – High Priority***

The Committee supports the proposal in the amount specified and ranks it as a high priority.

***Sec. 7, 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 185, Sec. E.100.4; Rural Infrastructure Assistance Program language; revised language – High Priority***

The Committee supports and ranks as a high priority this revised language, which was developed in collaboration with [REDACTED]:

***Insert revised language here***

***Sec. 10, 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 185, Sec. E.300.2; Employment Supports for New Americans language; revised language – High Priority***

The Committee supports and ranks as a high priority this revised language, which was developed in collaboration with members of the Administration:

**Sec. E.300.2 EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS FOR NEW AMERICANS**

(a) The State Refugee Office, in consultation with the Vermont Department of Labor, shall administer a grant program to support the development of coordinated, community-based systems, with consideration of regional networks and resources, to assist in achieving economic self-sufficiency for New Americans, including refugees, humanitarian parolees, special immigrant visa holders, asylees, asylum-seekers, and ~~others who are pursuing a path to citizenship~~ **other immigrants with low income who are or intend to become residents of Vermont.**

(b) Grant funds may be allocated to:

(1) assess the current ability of a municipality or region supporting the resettlement of New Americans, ~~with a focus on Brattleboro, Bennington, Chittenden and Rutland,~~ including the availability of English language services, transportation, housing, employment supports, and economic and health services;

(2) provide employment and related support services for refugees, asylum seekers, and other New Americans, including technical support, employment training before or

during employment, English language learning, employment-related case management, job placement, transportation, and other related services; and

(3) provide staff support for the coordination of local and State resources to secure partnerships with organizations employing refugees, development of sustainable New American support systems for regions in which New Americans are being settled, creation of employer partnerships to serve multiple refugees, identification of cultural barriers for individuals or groups of refugees, and facilitation with necessary stakeholders to remove barriers and prepare for successful employment.

***Sec. 16, 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 185, Sec. G.300(c)(2); brownfields grant program; revised language – High Priority***

The Committee supports the proposal in the amount specified and ranks it as a high priority, with one important modification. The Committee recommends increasing the amount that regional planning commissions may use for administrative purposes from five percent to **10 percent**.

***Sec. 23, 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 83, Sec. 72; workforce recruitment and retention grants for health care and human services employees; revised language – High Priority***

The Committee supports this proposal and ranks it as a high priority. In addition, the Committee recommends reallocating any funds remaining on **[date certain]** from the \$400,000 that was appropriated to the Agency of Human Services by 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 183, Sec. 21 for nurse preceptor incentive grants for nurses employed by critical access hospitals to the broader nurse preceptor grant program authorized by 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 83, Sec. 72(f)(2)(A), as added by Sec. 23 of the budget adjustment act language proposed by the Governor.

***Sec. 28, 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 183, Sec. 47(d)(3); Vermont Economic Development Authority short-term forgivable loan language – **TBD*****

***Sec. 30, 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 183, Sec. 54; Downtown and Village Center Tax Credit Program – High Priority***

The Committee supports the proposal and ranks it as a high priority.

***New section; Agency of Commerce and Community Development; Build to Scale (\$350,000) – High Priority***

The Committee recommends appropriating \$350,000 to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development to provide a portion of the state match to allow the Northeastern Vermont Development Association and its partner, Do North Coworking, to apply for the 2023 Build to Scale Venture Challenge through the U.S. Economic Development Administration. If the application is successful, the funds would provide a capacity building opportunity to support the creation of scalable technology startups and

high-paying technology jobs in the Northeast Kingdom. Due to the timing of the application deadline, which is likely to be in early April this year as it was in 2022, the \$350,000 appropriation cannot wait for the fiscal year 2024 budget bill and must be addressed in the fiscal year 2023 budget adjustment act. A similar provision was included in Sec. 46(a)(33) of last year's budget adjustment act to support similar applications from Rutland and Springfield/Randolph. The Committee ranks this proposal as a high priority.