

Summary of Strike-all Amendment to S.310

“An act relating to natural disaster government response, recovery, and resiliency”

Part 1. Creation of the Community Resilience and Disaster Mitigation Fund (Secs. 1-3)

This bill incorporates all sections of [S.145](#) (an act relating to the Community Resilience and Disaster Mitigation Fund), except for the findings. These sections create a Community Resilience and Disaster Mitigation Grant Program to be administered by the Department of Public Safety for the purpose of awarding grants for municipal disaster mitigation projects. A \$15,000,000 appropriation will initially stand-up the fund.

Part 2. Emergency Management Personnel (Secs. 4-6)

This bill incorporates all sections of [S.250](#) (an act relating to emergency management personnel). These sections create a definition of “emergency response personnel” to include public works personnel, who will be treated akin to traditional emergency-oriented professions, like firefighters and police, for the purposes of emergency response.

Part 3. Municipal Stormwater Utilities (Secs. 7-8A)

[Summary part to be updated.]

Part 4. Creation of the Urban Search and Rescue Team (Sec. 9)

This bill incorporates Sec. 6 of [H.627](#) (an act relating to emergency preparedness and hazard response). This section will create the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Team within the Department of Public Safety and allocate \$750,000.00 annually to the Department of Public Safety to facilitate the operations of the USAR Team.

Part 5. Vermont-211 Information Privacy (Sec. 10)

This section requires Vermont 211 to keep confidential any personal information acquired from victims of natural disasters except for coordinating relief work for affected individuals.

Part 6. Best Management Practices for Rebuilding After Emergencies (Sec. 11)

This bill incorporates Secs. 14, 15, and 18 of [H.723](#) (an act relating to flood recovery), and all of [S. 223](#) (an act relating to the assessment of the Vermont Emergency Management Division’s disaster preparedness). This section requires the Department of Public Safety’s Division of Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) to perform an “after action review.” In addition to the federal Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program’s requirements, the review may include examining the adequacy of early warning and evacuation orders, designated evacuation routes and emergency shelters, the present system of local emergency management directors in wide-spread emergencies and the State’s present emergency communications systems. VEM will also publish best management practices for rebuilding after emergencies and report back to both the House and Senate Committees on Government Operations on both the outcome of the review and the best management practices.

Part 7. Shelter Identification; Funding Shelter Operation (Secs. 12)

This section requires VEM, in consultation with the Agency of Human Services, to publish best management practices for the placement and funding of local emergency shelters.

Part 8. Emergency Communications (Sec. 13-15)

These sections require VEM, in consultation with the Enhanced E-911 Board, to develop a policy using E-911 to provide more effective VT-Alerts in large emergencies. These will modernize statutory language so that “originating carriers” are required to provide location and caller data in accordance with current 911 standards. Originating carriers must also notify their customers of outages impacting communication with 911 or receiving emergency notifications. These sections will also require the Enhanced 911 Board, in consultation with the Public Utilities Commission, to evaluate and report on the current tariffs for service elements necessary for the provision of Enhanced 911 services.

Part 9. Interpretation Services for State Emergency Communications (Secs. 16-18)

These sections require VEM to ensure interpretation services are being provided to individuals who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind and to individuals with limited English proficiency for all State emergency communications. These appropriate \$15,000 for improving State Police radio communications and \$25,000 for outreach to increase VT Alert registration and emergency preparedness. These sections also create an Interpretation Services for Emergency Communications Working Group to develop and report on best practices for the distribution of interpretation services on mass communication platforms to ensure emergency communications are being effectively delivered to individuals who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or DeafBlind and to individuals with limited English language proficiency.

Part 10. Creation of Chief Climate Resilience Officer (Sec. 19)

This section creates a Chief Climate Resilience Officer who shall directly report to the Governor.

Part 11. Post-Secondary Disaster Management Programs (Sec. 20)

This section will require the Vermont State University and the President or designee for the University of Vermont report on potentially creating post-secondary disaster management programs.

Part 12. Benefits for the Survivors of Emergency and Public Works Personnel (Sec. 21)

This bill incorporates all sections of [S.235](#) (an act relating to survivor benefits for public works employees).

Part 13. Emergency Powers of the Governor and Emergency Management (Secs. 22-32)

These sections remove various instances of catch-all language in the Governor’s emergency powers so that the powers are limited to the scope of each statutory section. These tie the sections regarding the accepting of gifts, grants, and loans during emergencies to the regular statutory process for doing so (32 V.S.A. § 5), which includes an expedited process. These change who may appointment some members of the State Emergency Response Commission. These also bring terminology into conformance across statutory sections (e.g. “proclaim” versus “declare” an emergency).

Part 14. Effective Date (Sec. 33)

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2024.