

Final Proposed Filing - Coversheet

Instructions:

In accordance with Title 3 Chapter 25 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated and the “Rule on Rulemaking” adopted by the Office of the Secretary of State, this filing will be considered complete upon filing and acceptance of these forms with the Office of the Secretary of State, and the Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules.

All forms shall be submitted at the Office of the Secretary of State, no later than 3:30 pm on the last scheduled day of the work week.

The data provided in text areas of these forms will be used to generate a notice of rulemaking in the portal of “Proposed Rule Postings” online, and the newspapers of record if the rule is marked for publication. Publication of notices will be charged back to the promulgating agency.

**PLEASE REMOVE ANY COVERSHEET OR FORM NOT
REQUIRED WITH THE CURRENT FILING BEFORE DELIVERY!**

Certification Statement: As the adopting Authority of this rule (see 3 V.S.A. § 801 (b) (11) for a definition), I approve the contents of this filing entitled:

10 App. V.S.A. § 12., Leashed tracking dogs (CVR 12-010-059)

_____, on 07/29/2026
/s/ Jason M. Batchelder ,
(signature) (date)

Printed Name and Title:

Jason M. Batchelder, Commissioner
Department of Fish and Wildlife
Secretary, Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board

RECEIVED BY: _____

- ☐ Coversheet
- ☐ Adopting Page
- ☐ Economic Impact Analysis
- ☐ Environmental Impact Analysis
- ☐ Strategy for Maximizing Public Input
- ☐ Scientific Information Statement (if applicable)
- ☐ Incorporated by Reference Statement (if applicable)
- ☐ Clean text of the rule (Amended text without annotation)
- ☐ Annotated text (Clearly marking changes from previous rule)
- ☐ ICAR Minutes
- ☐ Copy of Comments
- ☐ Responsiveness Summary

1. TITLE OF RULE FILING:

10 App. V.S.A. § 12., Leashed tracking dogs (CVR 12-010-059)

2. PROPOSED NUMBER ASSIGNED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE

26P017

3. ADOPTING AGENCY:

Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board

4. PRIMARY CONTACT PERSON:

(A PERSON WHO IS ABLE TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CONTENT OF THE RULE).

Name: Hannah Smith

Agency: Department of Fish and Wildlife

Mailing Address: 1 National Life Dr., Davis 2, Montpelier
Vermont, 05620

Telephone: 802-461-8187 Fax: 802-828-1250

E-Mail: hannah.smith@vermont.gov

Web URL *(WHERE THE RULE WILL BE POSTED)*:

<https://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/about-us/fish-andwildlife-board/board-rules>

5. SECONDARY CONTACT PERSON:

(A SPECIFIC PERSON FROM WHOM COPIES OF FILINGS MAY BE REQUESTED OR WHO MAY ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT FORMS SUBMITTED FOR FILING IF DIFFERENT FROM THE PRIMARY CONTACT PERSON).

Name: John Austin

Agency: Department of Fish and Wildlife

Mailing Address: 1 National Life Dr., Davis 2, Montpelier
Vermont 05620

Telephone: 802-371-9895 Fax: 802-828-1250

E-Mail: john.austin@vermont.gov

6. RECORDS EXEMPTION INCLUDED WITHIN RULE:

(DOES THE RULE CONTAIN ANY PROVISION DESIGNATING INFORMATION AS CONFIDENTIAL; LIMITING ITS PUBLIC RELEASE; OR OTHERWISE, EXEMPTING IT FROM INSPECTION AND COPYING?) No

IF YES, CITE THE STATUTORY AUTHORITY FOR THE EXEMPTION:

PLEASE SUMMARIZE THE REASON FOR THE EXEMPTION:

7. LEGAL AUTHORITY / ENABLING LEGISLATION:

(THE SPECIFIC STATUTORY OR LEGAL CITATION FROM SESSION LAW INDICATING WHO THE ADOPTING ENTITY IS AND THUS WHO THE SIGNATORY SHOULD BE. THIS SHOULD BE A SPECIFIC CITATION NOT A CHAPTER CITATION).

10 V.S.A. § 4082(a); 10 V.S.A. § 4712.

8. EXPLANATION OF HOW THE RULE IS WITHIN THE AUTHORITY OF THE AGENCY:

10 V.S.A. §4082(a) states that the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board is authorized to adopt rules "for the regulation of fish and wild game and the taking thereof" and that the rules "shall be designed to maintain the best health, population, and utilization levels of the regulated species. 10 V.S.A. § 4712 authorizes the Commissioner to certify an individual to use a leashed dog to track injured wildlife, and establish conditions and procedures for certification by rule.

9. THE FILING HAS NOT CHANGED SINCE THE FILING OF THE PROPOSED RULE.

10. THE AGENCY HAS NOT INCLUDED WITH THIS FILING A LETTER EXPLAINING IN DETAIL WHAT CHANGES WERE MADE, CITING CHAPTER AND SECTION WHERE APPLICABLE.

11. SUBSTANTIAL ARGUMENTS AND CONSIDERATIONS WERE NOT RAISED FOR OR AGAINST THE ORIGINAL PROPOSAL.

12. THE AGENCY HAS INCLUDED COPIES OF ALL WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS AND SYNOPSES OF ORAL COMMENTS RECEIVED.

13. THE AGENCY HAS INCLUDED A LETTER EXPLAINING IN DETAIL THE REASONS FOR THE AGENCY'S DECISION TO REJECT OR ADOPT THEM.

14. CONCISE SUMMARY (150 WORDS OR LESS):

The proposed rule amendments make two changes to the existing leashed tracking dog rule: it amends the definition of "big game animal" to be consistent with the definition in 10 V.S.A. § 4001, to include all big game animals including moose. This will allow hunters to employ leashed tracking dogs to legally track dead or wounded moose. And the proposed amendment strikes the language limiting tracking to big game seasons and the 24-hour period immediately following. This will allow for the use of tracking dogs to locate animals injured by vehicles outside the legal hunting seasons.

15. EXPLANATION OF WHY THE RULE IS NECESSARY:

Leased tracking dog licensees can provide valuable assistance in locating big game animals that have been injured outside the hunting season by vehicle collisions, during depredation efforts to mitigate crop damage, and potentially injured during poaching attempts. The proposed revisions will allow for the use of tracking dogs in those scenarios, to support enforcement efforts and reduce wanton waste.

16. EXPLANATION OF HOW THE RULE IS NOT ARBITRARY:

The rule is explicitly authorized by statute and consistent with the language of 10 V.S.A. § 4712, which authorizes adoption of standard conditions for leashed tracking dog licensees through rule. The rule is also consistent with the policy articulated in 10 V.S.A. § 4922, which prohibits individuals from intentionally or knowingly failing to make a reasonable effort to retrieve big game animals that have been killed.

17. LIST OF PEOPLE, ENTERPRISES AND GOVERNMENT ENTITIES AFFECTED BY THIS RULE:

Leashed tracking dog licensees

Hunters

Department Staff, including Game Wardens

18. BRIEF SUMMARY OF ECONOMIC IMPACT (150 WORDS OR LESS):

The proposed rule changes are not anticipated to have an economic impact.

19. A HEARING WAS HELD.

20. HEARING INFORMATION

(THE FIRST HEARING SHALL BE NO SOONER THAN 30 DAYS FOLLOWING THE POSTING OF NOTICES ONLINE).

IF THIS FORM IS INSUFFICIENT TO LIST THE INFORMATION FOR EACH HEARING, PLEASE ATTACH A SEPARATE SHEET TO COMPLETE THE HEARING INFORMATION.

Date:

Time: AM

Street Address:

Zip Code:

URL for Virtual:

Date:
Time: AM
Street Address:
Zip Code:
URL for Virtual:

Date:
Time: AM
Street Address:
Zip Code:
URL for Virtual:

Date:
Time: AM
Street Address:
Zip Code:
URL for Virtual:

21. DEADLINE FOR COMMENT (NO EARLIER THAN 7 DAYS FOLLOWING LAST HEARING):

KEYWORDS (PLEASE PROVIDE AT LEAST 3 KEYWORDS OR PHRASES TO AID IN THE SEARCHABILITY OF THE RULE NOTICE ONLINE).

Big game

Hunting

leashed tracking dogs

wanton waste

Adopting Page

Instructions:

This form must accompany each filing made during the rulemaking process:

Note: To satisfy the requirement for an annotated text, an agency must submit the entire rule in annotated form with proposed and final proposed filings. Filing an annotated paragraph or page of a larger rule is not sufficient. Annotation must clearly show the changes to the rule.

When possible, the agency shall file the annotated text, using the appropriate page or pages from the Code of Vermont Rules as a basis for the annotated version. New rules need not be accompanied by an annotated text.

1. TITLE OF RULE FILING:

10 App. V.S.A. § 12., Leashed tracking dogs (CVR 12-010-059)

2. ADOPTING AGENCY:

Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board

3. TYPE OF FILING (*PLEASE CHOOSE THE TYPE OF FILING FROM THE DROPDOWN MENU BASED ON THE DEFINITIONS PROVIDED BELOW*):

- **AMENDMENT** - Any change to an already existing rule, even if it is a complete rewrite of the rule, it is considered an amendment if the rule is replaced with other text.
- **NEW RULE** - A rule that did not previously exist even under a different name.
- **REPEAL** - The removal of a rule in its entirety, without replacing it with other text.

This filing is **AN AMENDMENT OF AN EXISTING RULE** .

4. LAST ADOPTED (*PLEASE PROVIDE THE SOS LOG#, TITLE AND EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE LAST ADOPTION FOR THE EXISTING RULE*):

Last adopted September 5, 1996, SOS Log #96-66

Interagency Committee on Administrative Rules (ICAR) Minutes

Date/Time: June 8, 2026, 2:00 PM

Location: Virtually via Microsoft Teams

Members Present: Chair Nick Kramer, Heidi Moreau, Patrick Murphy, Earl Fechter, John Kessler, Russ McCracken, Stephen Brown

Members Absent: Jennifer Mojo

Minutes By: Chrissy Gilhuly

- ▶ 2:00 p.m. meeting called to order.
- ▶ Review and approval of minutes from the May 11, 2026 [meeting](#).
- ▶ No additions/deletions to agenda. Agenda approved as drafted.
- ▶ No public comments made.
- ▶ Presentation of Proposed Rules with recommended changes on pages to follow.
 1. Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) – Workers' Compensation Medical Fee Schedule Rule 40
 - a. Medical providers who care for injured workers covered by a workers' compensation policy are required to bill for their services using the Workers' Compensation Medical Fee Schedule. It is vital to the health of the workers' compensation system that such fees be sufficient to ensure the provision of services, without being so generous as to increase the cost of insurance coverage. The rule generally modestly raises reimbursement amounts, adds a more robust table of Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) and Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) codes, and provides for annual indexing going forward using Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) "market basket" factors, capped at 3% annually.
 2. Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) - 10 App. V.S.A. § 2, Report, Big Game (CVR 12-010-090)
 - a. The proposed changes explicitly prohibit making false statements in the reporting of wild game taken, allow the Commissioner of Fish and Wildlife to pay a fee of at least one dollar per report to agents at authorized reporting stations, and make minor technical updates to the citations in the rule.

Vermont Agency of Administration

3. Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) - 10 App. V.S.A. § 2a. Big game; tagging (CVR 12-010-032)
 - a. The proposed amendments are intended to clarify the big game tagging requirements regarding required tag information, requirements for individuals taking game on their own land, and tagging requirements for the transportation of animal parts. The proposed rule language requires that all big game carcasses are tagged with a tag that contains the name of the hunter and the applicable tag or permit number. This information is necessary for appropriate enforcement of license and permitting requirements.
4. Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) - 10 App. V.S.A. § 5. Bow and arrow and crossbow standards
 - a. The proposed amendments continue to require the same arrowhead width and cutting edges but apply the standards to broadheads used with crossbows as well.
5. Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) - 10 App. V.S.A. § 12., Leashed tracking dogs (CVR 12-010-059)
 - a. The proposed rule amendments make two changes to the existing leashed tracking dog rule. They amend the definition of "big game animal" to be consistent with the definition in 10 V.S.A. § 4001, to include all big game animals including moose. This will allow hunters to employ leashed tracking dogs to legally track dead or wounded moose. The proposed amendment also strikes language limiting tracking to big game seasons and the 24-hour period immediately following the season. This will allow for the use of tracking dogs to locate animals injured or killed outside the legal hunting seasons.
6. Agency of Human Services (AHS) - Health Benefits Eligibility and Enrollment Rule, General Provisions and Definitions (Part 1)
 - a. This proposed rule amends part 1-3, 5 and 7 of the 8-part Health Benefits Eligibility and Enrollment (HBEE) rule. Parts 1,2,3,5 and 7 were last amended effective January 1, 2026. Substantive revisions include: newly requiring certain adult Medicaid applicants and enrollees demonstrate compliance with work and community engagement rules as a factor of eligibility; reducing the retroactive Medicaid coverage period from three months to one month for Adult coverage group enrollees and two months for all other enrollees; restricting non-citizen eligibility for both Medicaid and Qualified Health Plan premium tax credits and adding a new category of "eligible non-citizen" to clarify which individuals remain eligible; adjusting the renewal period from 12 to 6 months for Medicaid enrollees in the Adult coverage group; shortening the annual open enrollment period from November 1st-January 15th to November 1st - December 15th. All of these substantive revisions are required by federal law.

Vermont Agency of Administration

7. Agency of Human Services (AHS) - Health Benefits Eligibility and Enrollment Rule, Eligibility Standards (Part 2)
 8. Agency of Human Services (AHS) - Health Benefits Eligibility and Enrollment Rule, Nonfinancial Eligibility Requirements (Part 3)
 9. Agency of Human Services (AHS) - Health Benefits Eligibility and Enrollment Rule, Financial Methodologies (Part 5)
 10. This proposed rule amends part 1-3, 5 and 7 of the 8- part Health Agency of Human Services (AHS) - Health Benefits Eligibility and Enrollment Rule, Eligibility-and-Enrollment Procedures (Part 7)
 11. VOSHA Review Board - VOSHA Review Board Rules of Procedure
 - a. These rules serve as a guide to the Review Board, its Clerk and Hearing Officers, and parties regarding the orderly transaction of its proceedings regarding contested VOSHA cases. There are two levels of review available to the parties through the Rules of Procedure. The first is through a hearing before a Hearing Officer. The second level is through a discretionary review by the Review Board, should a party (or the Review Board on its own motion) want to appeal the Hearing Officer's decision. There are two types of proceedings offered in the Rules: conventional and simplified. Simplified Proceedings offer employers (respondents) a less formal way to contest a citation (no answer needs to be filed and documents are exchanged freely without the use of discovery, generally). Rules regarding settlement and the parties' option of using Hearing Officers to mediate a settlement are covered in the Rules.
- Other business
 - Advice for completing APA forms – Approved forms for posting.
 - ▶ Next scheduled meeting is July 13, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.
 - ▶ 3:55 p.m. meeting adjourned.

To receive this information in an alternative format or for other accessibility requests, please contact:

Agency of Administration
ADM.Secretary@vermont.gov, 802-828-3322

Vermont Agency of Administration

Proposed Rule: Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) – Workers’ Compensation Medical Fee Schedule Rule 40

Presented By: Dirk Anderson

Motion made to accept the rule by Heidi Moreau, seconded by John Kessler, and passed unanimously, except for Stephen Brown, who abstained, with the following recommendations:

- 1) **Cover Sheet**
 - a. #7: Typo ‘durrable’ has two b’s
 - b. #12: Economic Impact; focus on positive “savings”
- 2) **Adopting Page**
 - a. Include the title of the rule after the SOS log number
- 3) **Public Input Maximization Plan**
 - a. #4: Typo in the word ‘insurance’

Vermont Agency of Administration

Proposed Rule: Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) - 10 App. V.S.A. § 2, Report, Big Game (CVR 12-010-090)

Presented By: Hannah Smith and Justin Stedman

Motion made to accept the rule by John Kessler, seconded by Earl Fechter, and passed unanimously, with the following recommendations:

- 1) **Cover Sheet**
 - a. Stylistically – Consider changing Report to Reporting
 - b. #7: Closed parentheses missing end of first sentence
 - c. #8: Expand to include language in #9, since #8 is published
 - d. #9: Include hunters as effected parties
 - e. #9: Clarify flexibility in fee and reimbursement setting
 - f. #10: Typo – 10 VSA is written twice
 - g. #11: Expand to include what type of small business owners affected
- 2) **Adopting Page**
 - b. Include the title of the rule after the SOS log number
- 3) **Environmental Impact**
 - a. #3: Greenhouse gasses, should have one 's'
 - b. #9: Assessment, missing one 's'

Vermont Agency of Administration

Proposed Rule: Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) - 10 App. V.S.A. § 2a. Big game; tagging (CVR 12-010-032)

Presented By: Hannah Smith and Justin Stedman

Motion made to accept the rule by Stephen Brown, seconded by Heidi Moreau, and passed unanimously, with the following recommendations:

- 1) **Cover Sheet**
 - a. #7: Closed parentheses missing end of first sentence
 - b. #10: Typo – 10 VSA is written twice
- 2) **Adopting Page**
 - a. Include the title of the rule after the SOS log number
- 3) **Environmental Impact**
 - a. #3: Greenhouse gasses, should have one 's'
 - b. #9: Assessment, missing one 's'

Vermont Agency of Administration

Proposed Rule: Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) - 10 App. V.S.A. § 5. Bow and arrow and crossbow standards

Presented By: Hannah Smith and Justin Stedman

Motion made to accept the rule by Russ McCracken, seconded by Earl Fechter, and passed unanimously, with the following recommendations:

1) **Cover Sheet**

- a. #8: Recommend expanding the concise summary

DRAFT

Vermont Agency of Administration

Proposed Rule: Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) - 10 App. V.S.A. § 12.,
Leashed tracking dogs (CVR 12-010-059)

Presented By: Hannah Smith and Justin Stedman

Motion made to accept the rule by Heidi Moreau, seconded by John Kessler, and passed unanimously, with the following recommendations:

1. Environmental Impact

- a. #3: Response not included; add 'no impact'
- b. #8: Other – add positive impact if applicable

DRAFT

Vermont Agency of Administration

Proposed Rule: Agency of Human Services (AHS) - Health Benefits Eligibility and Enrollment (HBEE) Rule, General Provisions and Definitions (Part 1-3, 5 and 7)

Presented By: Dani Fuoco

Motion made to accept **all five parts** of the HBEE rules by John Kessler, seconded by Stephen Brown, and passed unanimously, except for Heidi Moreau, who abstained, with the following recommendations:

1. Economic Impact

- a. #3: Typo in the word ineligible
- b. #8: Other – add positive impact if applicable

2. Environmental Impact

- a. #3: Repeat of answer to #2, adopting agency, instead of impact.

Vermont Agency of Administration

Proposed Rule: VOSHA Review Board - VOSHA Review Board Rules of Procedure

Presented By: Gary McQuesten

Motion made to accept the rule by John Kessler, seconded by Stephen Brown, and passed unanimously, with the following recommendations:

1. **Cover Sheet**
 - a. #7: Use same review board so references same entity
- 2) Economic Impact
 - a. #6: Typo - Unnegative should change to negative
 - b. #6: Change less to fewer before the formalities.

DRAFT

Economic Impact Analysis

Instructions:

In completing the economic impact analysis, an agency analyzes and evaluates the anticipated costs and benefits to be expected from adoption of the rule; estimates the costs and benefits for each category of people enterprises and government entities affected by the rule; compares alternatives to adopting the rule; and explains their analysis concluding that rulemaking is the most appropriate method of achieving the regulatory purpose. If no impacts are anticipated, please specify “No impact anticipated” in the field.

Rules affecting or regulating schools or school districts must include cost implications to local school districts and taxpayers in the impact statement, a clear statement of associated costs, and consideration of alternatives to the rule to reduce or ameliorate costs to local school districts while still achieving the objectives of the rule (see 3 V.S.A. § 832b for details).

Rules affecting small businesses (excluding impacts incidental to the purchase and payment of goods and services by the State or an agency thereof), must include ways that a business can reduce the cost or burden of compliance or an explanation of why the agency determines that such evaluation isn’t appropriate, and an evaluation of creative, innovative or flexible methods of compliance that would not significantly impair the effectiveness of the rule or increase the risk to the health, safety, or welfare of the public or those affected by the rule.

1. TITLE OF RULE FILING:

10 App. V.S.A. § 12., Leashed tracking dogs (CVR 12-010-059)

2. ADOPTING AGENCY:

Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board

3. CATEGORY OF AFFECTED PARTIES:

LIST CATEGORIES OF PEOPLE, ENTERPRISES, AND GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES POTENTIALLY AFFECTED BY THE ADOPTION OF THIS RULE AND THE ESTIMATED COSTS AND BENEFITS ANTICIPATED:

Leashed tracking dog licensees may incur a higher demand for their services, but it is not anticipated that this will result in an economic impact, since the Department does not authorize or promote licensees' ability to charge for their services. Likewise, hunters who utilize the services of leashed tracking

dog licensees should not be impacted since licensees are not charging for their services. The proposed amendments will allow Department staff to utilize leashed tracking dogs for enforcement purposes outside of hunting seasons, but is not anticipated to have an economic impact on the Department.

4. IMPACT ON SCHOOLS:

INDICATE ANY IMPACT THAT THE RULE WILL HAVE ON PUBLIC EDUCATION, PUBLIC SCHOOLS, LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND/OR TAXPAYERS CLEARLY STATING ANY ASSOCIATED COSTS:

The proposed rule amendments will not have an impact on schools.

5. ALTERNATIVES: CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES TO THE RULE TO REDUCE OR AMELIORATE COSTS TO LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS WHILE STILL ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVE OF THE RULE.

The proposed rule amendments will not have an impact on schools.

6. IMPACT ON SMALL BUSINESSES:

INDICATE ANY IMPACT THAT THE RULE WILL HAVE ON SMALL BUSINESSES (EXCLUDING IMPACTS INCIDENTAL TO THE PURCHASE AND PAYMENT OF GOODS AND SERVICES BY THE STATE OR AN AGENCY THEREOF):

The proposed rule amendments will not have an impact on small businesses.

7. SMALL BUSINESS COMPLIANCE: EXPLAIN WAYS A BUSINESS CAN REDUCE THE COST/BURDEN OF COMPLIANCE OR AN EXPLANATION OF WHY THE AGENCY DETERMINES THAT SUCH EVALUATION ISN'T APPROPRIATE.

The proposed rule amendments will not have an impact on small businesses, there are no anticipated costs of compliance for small businesses.

8. COMPARISON:

COMPARE THE IMPACT OF THE RULE WITH THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF OTHER ALTERNATIVES TO THE RULE, INCLUDING NO RULE ON THE SUBJECT OR A RULE HAVING SEPARATE REQUIREMENTS FOR SMALL BUSINESS:

The proposed amendments are not anticipated to have an economic impact on small businesses.

9. SUFFICIENCY: DESCRIBE HOW THE ANALYSIS WAS CONDUCTED, IDENTIFYING RELEVANT INTERNAL AND/OR EXTERNAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION USED.

The analysis of economic impact is based on a assessment of relevant information including current and proposed leashed tracking dog requirements.

Environmental Impact Analysis

Instructions:

In completing the environmental impact analysis, an agency analyzes and evaluates the anticipated environmental impacts (positive or negative) to be expected from adoption of the rule; compares alternatives to adopting the rule; explains the sufficiency of the environmental impact analysis. If no impacts are anticipated, please specify “No impact anticipated” in the field.

Examples of Environmental Impacts include but are not limited to:

- Impacts on the emission of greenhouse gases
 - Impacts on the discharge of pollutants to water
 - Impacts on the arability of land
 - Impacts on the climate
 - Impacts on the flow of water
 - Impacts on recreation
 - Or other environmental impacts
-

1. TITLE OF RULE FILING:

10 App. V.S.A. § 12., Leashed tracking dogs (CVR 12-010-059)

2. ADOPTING AGENCY:

Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board

3. GREENHOUSE GAS: *EXPLAIN HOW THE RULE IMPACTS THE EMISSION OF GREENHOUSE GASES (E.G. TRANSPORTATION OF PEOPLE OR GOODS; BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE; LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT, WASTE GENERATION, ETC.):*

4. WATER: *EXPLAIN HOW THE RULE IMPACTS WATER (E.G. DISCHARGE / ELIMINATION OF POLLUTION INTO VERMONT WATERS, THE FLOW OF WATER IN THE STATE, WATER QUALITY ETC.):*

The proposed rule amendments will not impact water quality.

5. LAND: *EXPLAIN HOW THE RULE IMPACTS LAND (E.G. IMPACTS ON FORESTRY, AGRICULTURE ETC.):*

The proposed rule amendments will not impact land use.

6. **RECREATION:** *EXPLAIN HOW THE RULE IMPACTS RECREATION IN THE STATE:*

The proposed rule amendments will not directly impact recreation in the State. The use of leashed tracking dogs to track injured animals will allow for effective recovery of big game animals, including moose, killed by hunters.

7. **CLIMATE:** *EXPLAIN HOW THE RULE IMPACTS THE CLIMATE IN THE STATE:*

The proposed rule amendments will not impact climate in the State.

8. **OTHER:** *EXPLAIN HOW THE RULE IMPACT OTHER ASPECTS OF VERMONT'S ENVIRONMENT:*

The proposed rule amendments will not impact other aspects of Vermont's environment.

9. **SUFFICIENCY:** *DESCRIBE HOW THE ANALYSIS WAS CONDUCTED, IDENTIFYING RELEVANT INTERNAL AND/OR EXTERNAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION USED.*

The analysis was based on all available information about the current and proposed leashed tracking dog requirements and provides a sufficient assesment of the environmental impacts of the proposed rule.

Public Input Maximization Plan

Instructions:

Agencies are encouraged to hold hearings as part of their strategy to maximize the involvement of the public in the development of rules. Please complete the form below by describing the agency's strategy for maximizing public input (what it did do, or will do to maximize the involvement of the public).

This form must accompany each filing made during the rulemaking process:

1. TITLE OF RULE FILING:

10 App. V.S.A. § 12., Leashed tracking dogs (CVR 12-010-059)

2. ADOPTING AGENCY:

Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board

3. PLEASE DESCRIBE THE AGENCY'S STRATEGY TO MAXIMIZE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPOSED RULE, LISTING THE STEPS THAT HAVE BEEN OR WILL BE TAKEN TO COMPLY WITH THAT STRATEGY:

The Board meetings regarding all rulemaking are open to the public and the public is allowed to comment at every Board meeting. The Board votes to initiate the rulemaking process before filing with ICAR, votes after the public comment period, and then again before final adopted rules are filed with the Secretary of State. The public is free to comment to individual Board members and to the Department at any time during the rulemaking process. In addition, the board will hold a public hearing on the rule and have a public comment period that exceeds thirty days. The proposed rule language will be posted on the Board's rulemaking website, and the Department will publicize the proposed rule amendments in social media and press releases.

4. BEYOND GENERAL ADVERTISEMENTS, PLEASE LIST THE PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN OR WILL BE INVOLVED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPOSED RULE:

Public Input

Board members, Department staff including Game Wardens
and Biologists

Title 10 Appendix: Vermont Fish and Wildlife Regulations

§ 12. Leashed tracking dogs

1.0 Definitions.

For the purposes of this rule:

1.1 “Department” means the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife.

1.2 “Leashed tracking dog” means a dog which is used to track and find dead, injured, or wounded big game pursuant to a license issued in accordance with this rule. The dog must be licensed as required by subchapter 2 of chapter 193 of Title 20.

1.3 “Licensed” means a leashed tracking dog certificate issued pursuant to this rule, authorizing use of leashed tracking dogs as specified in this rule.

1.4 “Licensee” means a person who is the holder of a leashed tracking dog license.

1.5 “Physically incapacitated” means incapable of participating in the hunt due to physical injury.

1.6 “Dispatch” means to humanely kill.

1.7 “Big game animal” means big game as defined in 10 V.S.A. § 4001.

2.0 Prohibition.

Except as permitted by 10 V.S.A. § 4701 and section 4 of this rule, no person may use a dog to track dead, wounded or injured big game. Law enforcement officials acting in the performance of their official duties are exempt from the provisions of this rule.

3.0 Leashed Tracking Dog License.

A leashed tracking dog license issued by the Department entitles the licensee to:

3.1 Use leashed tracking dogs, during the day or at night to track and find dead, wounded or injured big game.

3.2 Dispatch wounded or injured big game animals which have been tracked and found in accordance with and pursuant to the conditions of such license.

3.2 Temporarily possess a big game animal which has been dispatched by the licensee, or reduced to possession by the licensee, until lawfully tagged or until delivered to a State Game Warden pursuant to the conditions of the license.

4.0 Leashed Tracking Dog License; Conditions.

4.1 A big game hunter who has killed, wounded or injured, or reasonably believes he or she has killed, wounded or injured, a big game animal during a big game season may engage a licensee to track and recover the animal. If the hunter is physically incapacitated, the licensee may track and dispatch the animal if the licensee is personally carrying a written signed

instrument from the hunter listing (1) the date, (2) the hunter's name, address, telephone number and big game license number, and (3) a statement that the hunter has engaged the licensee to track the animal, and that the hunter has killed, wounded or injured such animal, and that the hunter is unable to accompany the licensee because of physical incapacitation.

4.2 No person other than the licensee or, during legal hunting periods, the big game hunter who has engaged the licensee when specifically so authorized by the licensee, may carry a firearm or bow of any description while tracking dead, wounded or injured big game pursuant to this rule.

4.3 During legal hunting periods, the hunter who has engaged the licensee must dispatch the wounded or injured big game animal when found by the licensee by means which are lawful during the season in which it was wounded or injured and in a lawful manner reduce the animal to legal possession. However, the licensee must dispatch the wounded or injured animal if the legal hunting period has ended, when the hunter is not present, or, when in the judgment of the licensee it is unsafe or otherwise inappropriate for the hunter to do so.

4.4 The licensee may use a handgun of no less than .35 caliber with a barrel length of not less than four inches to dispatch a wounded or injured big game animal, and during the 24 hour period immediately following the last day of a big game season, provided that the licensee complies with all other provisions of federal, state and local laws and regulations concerning possession and discharge of firearms and the conditions of a license granted under this rule.

4.5 Before tracking a dead, wounded or injured animal, whether during a big game season or outside of the season, the licensee must notify, by telephone or in person, the State Game Warden assigned to the area. If the warden is unavailable, his or her immediate supervisor will be notified. Notification must include the 1) name of the licensee, 2) name, address, telephone number, and big game license number of the big game hunter engaging the licensee, 3) general location of the wounded or injured animal, and 4) the name of the owner(s) of the land where the search will be conducted.

4.6 The licensee must maintain physical control of the leashed tracking dog(s) at all times while conducting activities subject to this rule by means of a lead attached to the dog's collar or harness. This lead must be at least twelve (12) feet in length.

4.7 After a big game animal has been dispatched, the licensed hunter must immediately tag the carcass as required by Section 2a of part 4 Title 10 Appendix. If the hunter is physically incapacitated, the hunter must immediately tag the carcass upon delivery of the animal by the licensee. If the hunter is unavailable the licensee must report the incident to and deliver the animal to a State Game Warden or the State Game Warden's immediate supervisor.

4.8 The licensee must personally carry a current big game license and a valid leashed tracking dog license when conducting activities pursuant to this rule.

4.9 The licensee must notify the department in writing, of any change of address within 30 days of that change of address.

4.10 The licensee must submit to the department a written request for license renewal within the 30 days prior to the expiration of such license.

4.11 The licensee must submit an annual report to the Commissioner within 15 days of the close of the last yearly big game season, which shall give all dates, locations and outcomes of tracking incidents as well as the name, address and hunting license number of each hunter and name of each State Game Warden contacted in each case.

5.0 Leashed Tracking Dog License Qualifications.

The applicant for a license must:

- (a) Provide proof of possession of a current Vermont big game hunting license;
- (b) Not have been convicted of, or pled guilty to, an offense under the Fish and Wildlife Law, within the previous five years which resulted in a revocation of the person's big game, hunting, or archery license;
- (c) Submit a non-refundable application fee of \$25.00 and a completed application to the Department prior to taking the written examination;
- (d) Receive a grade of 80 percent or higher on a written examination administered by the department. The examination will be offered at least once a year and will test the applicant's knowledge of Fish and Wildlife law and regulations, dog training and handling methods and other areas of knowledge as deemed appropriate or relevant by the Commissioner.

6.0 Leashed Tracking Dog License; Issuance.

6.1 Applicants and licensees shall pay the following fees:

- (a) Initial license—resident—\$100
non-resident—\$200
- (b) Renewal—resident—\$125.00
non-resident—\$225.00

6.2 A license is valid for five years from the date of issuance.

6.3 A license is valid only for the individual identified on the license and is not transferable.

6.4 A licensee who fails to renew his/her license within one year of the date of expiration must reapply and meet all the qualifications set forth in Section 5 of this rule.

6.5 The Department may place special conditions on the license which it deems appropriate or necessary. The Department may also waive or dispense with any requirement of this rule when the Department deems it to be in the public interest to do so.

7.0 Leashed Tracking Dog License; Suspension or Revocation.

A license issued pursuant to this rule shall be revoked concurrently with all other licenses upon conviction of a violation of Vermont Fish and Wildlife law pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 4502.

(Added 1996, Fish and Wildlife Commissioner's Reg. No. 1015, eff. Sept. 5, 1996.)

Citations

The Vermont Statutes Online

The Statutes below include the actions of the 2025 session of the General Assembly.

NOTE: The Vermont Statutes Online is an unofficial copy of the Vermont Statutes Annotated that is provided as a convenience.

[Title 10 : Conservation and Development](#)

[Chapter 103 : Department of Fish and Wildlife](#)

Subchapter 002 : REGULATORY POWERS OVER FISH AND WILDLIFE

(Cite as: 10 V.S.A. § 4082)

- § 4082. Vermont Fish and Wildlife Regulations

(a) The Board may adopt rules, under 3 V.S.A. chapter 25, to be known as the “Vermont Fish and Wildlife Regulations” for the regulation of fish and wild game and the taking thereof except as otherwise specifically provided by law. The rules shall be designed to maintain the best health, population, and utilization levels of the regulated species and of other necessary or desirable species that are ecologically related to the regulated species. The rules shall be supported by investigation and research conducted by the Department on behalf of the Board.

(b)(1) Except as provided for under subdivision (2) of this subsection, the Board annually may adopt rules relating to the management of migratory game birds, and shall follow the procedures for rulemaking contained in 3 V.S.A. chapter 25. For each such rule, the Board shall conduct a hearing but, when necessary, may schedule the hearing for a day before the terms of the rule are expected to be determined.

(2) Beginning with the 2015 hunting season, the Board may set by procedure the daily bag and possession limits of migratory game birds that may be harvested in each Waterfowl Hunting Zone annually without following the procedures for rulemaking contained in 3 V.S.A. chapter 25. The annual daily bag and possession limits of migratory game birds shall be consistent with federal requirements. Prior to setting the migratory game bird daily bag and possession limits, the Board shall provide a period of not less than 30 days of public notice and shall conduct at least two public informational hearings. The final migratory game bird daily bag and possession limits shall be enforceable by the Department under its enforcement authority in part 4 of this title.

(c) The Board may set by procedure the annual number of antlerless deer that can be harvested in each Wildlife Management Unit and the annual number of moose that can be harvested in each Wildlife Management Unit without following the procedures for rulemaking contained in 3 V.S.A. chapter 25. The annual numbers of antlerless deer and moose that can be harvested shall be supported by investigation and research conducted by the Department on behalf of the Board. Prior to setting the antlerless deer and moose permit numbers, the Board shall provide a period of not less than 30 days of public notice and shall conduct at least three public informational hearings. The public informational hearings may be conducted simultaneously with the regional antlerless deer meetings required by 10 V.S.A. App. § 2b. The final annual antlerless deer and moose harvest permit numbers shall be enforceable by the Department under its enforcement authority in part 4 of this title. The final annual antlerless deer and moose harvest permit numbers shall be reported to the House Committee on Environment as part of the annual deer report required under section 4084 of this title. The provisions of 2 V.S.A. § 20(d)

(expiration of required reports) shall not apply to the report to be made under this subsection. (Added 1961, No. 119, § 1, eff. May 9, 1961; amended 1979, No. 66, § 1; 1979, No. 68, § 2, eff. May 8, 1979; 1979, No. 148 (Adj. Sess.), §§ 3, 4, eff. April 24, 1980; 1985, No. 215 (Adj. Sess.), § 5, eff. June 2, 1986; 2013, No. 78, § 3; 2013, No. 116 (Adj. Sess.), § 4; 2017, No. 154 (Adj. Sess.), §§ 1, 21, eff. May 21, 2018.)

Title 10 : Conservation and Development

Chapter 113 : Game

Subchapter 001 : GENERAL PROVISIONS

(Cite as: 10 V.S.A. § 4712)

- **§ 4712. Tracking of injured wildlife**

(a) The Commissioner may certify an individual to use a dog on a leash to track injured wild animals. The certificate shall be valid for five years from date of issuance. The Commissioner shall establish the following by rule:

- (1) procedures for issuing a certificate under this section;
- (2) qualifications required for certification under this section;
- (3) privileges granted to a person holding a certificate under this section.

(b) Fees to be charged to a person applying for certification under this section shall be:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| (1) Application fee | \$25.00 |
| (2) Initial certification—resident | \$100.00 |
| (3) Initial certification—nonresident | \$200.00 |
| (4) Renewal—resident | \$125.00 |
| (5) Renewal—nonresident | \$225.00 |

(Added 1995, No. 65 (Adj. Sess.), § 1; amended 1997, No. 155 (Adj. Sess.), § 47, eff. Jan. 1, 1999.)

Title 10 Appendix: Vermont Fish and Wildlife Regulations

§ 12. Leashed tracking dogs

1.0 Definitions.

For the purposes of this rule:

1.1 “Department” means the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife.

1.2 “Leashed tracking dog” means a dog which is used to track and find dead, injured, or wounded big game pursuant to a license issued in accordance with this rule. The dog must be licensed as required by subchapter 2 of chapter 193 of Title 20.

1.3 “Licensed” means a leashed tracking dog certificate issued pursuant to this rule, authorizing use of leashed tracking dogs as specified in this rule.

1.4 “Licensee” means a person who is the holder of a leashed tracking dog license.

1.5 “Physically incapacitated” means incapable of participating in the hunt due to physical injury.

1.6 “Dispatch” means to humanely kill.

1.7 “Big game animal” means ~~deer and bear only~~ big game as defined in 10 V.S.A. § 4001.

2.0 Prohibition.

Except as permitted by 10 V.S.A. § 4701 and section 4 of this rule, no person may use a dog to track dead, wounded or injured big game. Law enforcement officials acting in the performance of their official duties are exempt from the provisions of this rule.

3.0 Leashed Tracking Dog License.

A leashed tracking dog license issued by the Department entitles the licensee to:

3.1 Use leashed tracking dogs, during the day or at night to track and find dead, wounded or injured big game, ~~during all big game seasons and the 24 hour period immediately following the last day of a big game season.~~

3.2 Dispatch wounded or injured big game animals which have been tracked and found in accordance with and pursuant to the conditions of such license.

3.2 Temporarily possess a big game animal which has been dispatched by the licensee, or reduced to possession by the licensee, until lawfully tagged or until delivered to a State Game Warden pursuant to the conditions of the license.

4.0 Leashed Tracking Dog License; Conditions.

4.1 A big game hunter who has killed, wounded or injured, or reasonably believes he or she has killed, wounded or injured, a big game animal during a big game season may engage a licensee to track and recover the animal. If the hunter is physically incapacitated, the licensee

may track and dispatch the animal if the licensee is personally carrying a written signed instrument from the hunter listing (1) the date, (2) the hunter's name, address, telephone number and big game license number, and (3) a statement that the hunter has engaged the licensee to track the animal, and that the hunter has killed, wounded or injured such animal, and that the hunter is unable to accompany the licensee because of physical incapacitation.

4.2 No person other than the licensee or, during legal hunting periods, the big game hunter who has engaged the licensee when specifically so authorized by the licensee, may carry a firearm or bow of any description while tracking dead, wounded or injured big game pursuant to this rule.

4.3 During legal hunting periods, the hunter who has engaged the licensee must dispatch the wounded or injured big game animal when found by the licensee by means which are lawful during the season in which it was wounded or injured and in a lawful manner reduce the animal to legal possession. However, the licensee must dispatch the wounded or injured animal if the legal hunting period has ended, when the hunter is not present, or, when in the judgment of the licensee it is unsafe or otherwise inappropriate for the hunter to do so.

4.4 The licensee may use a handgun of no less than .35 caliber with a barrel length of not less than four inches to dispatch a wounded or injured big game animal, and during the 24 hour period immediately following the last day of a big game season, provided that the licensee complies with all other provisions of federal, state and local laws and regulations concerning possession and discharge of firearms and the conditions of a license granted under this rule.

4.5 Before tracking a dead, wounded or injured animal, whether during a big game season or outside of the season, the licensee must notify, by telephone or in person, the State Game Warden assigned to the area. If the warden is unavailable, his or her immediate supervisor will be notified. Notification must include the 1) name of the licensee, 2) name, address, telephone number, and big game license number of the big game hunter engaging the licensee, 3) general location of the wounded or injured animal, and 4) the name of the owner(s) of the land where the search will be conducted.

4.6 The licensee must maintain physical control of the leashed tracking dog(s) at all times while conducting activities subject to this rule by means of a lead attached to the dog's collar or harness. This lead must be at least twelve (12) feet in length.

4.7 After a big game animal has been dispatched, the licensed hunter must immediately tag the carcass as required by Section 2a of part 4 Title 10 Appendix. If the hunter is physically incapacitated, the hunter must immediately tag the carcass upon delivery of the animal by the licensee. If the hunter is unavailable the licensee must report the incident to and deliver the animal to a State Game Warden or the State Game Warden's immediate supervisor.

4.8 The licensee must personally carry a current big game license and a valid leashed tracking dog license when conducting activities pursuant to this rule.

4.9 The licensee must notify the department in writing, of any change of address within 30 days of that change of address.

4.10 The licensee must submit to the department a written request for license renewal within the 30 days prior to the expiration of such license.

4.11 The licensee must submit an annual report to the Commissioner within 15 days of the close of the last yearly big game season, which shall give all dates, locations and outcomes of tracking incidents as well as the name, address and hunting license number of each hunter and name of each State Game Warden contacted in each case.

5.0 Leashed Tracking Dog License Qualifications.

The applicant for a license must:

- (a) Provide proof of possession of a current Vermont big game hunting license;
- (b) Not have been convicted of, or pled guilty to, an offense under the Fish and Wildlife Law, within the previous five years which resulted in a revocation of the person's big game, hunting, or archery license;
- (c) Submit a non-refundable application fee of \$25.00 and a completed application to the Department prior to taking the written examination;
- (d) Receive a grade of 80 percent or higher on a written examination administered by the department. The examination will be offered at least once a year and will test the applicant's knowledge of Fish and Wildlife law and regulations, dog training and handling methods and other areas of knowledge as deemed appropriate or relevant by the Commissioner.

6.0 Leashed Tracking Dog License; Issuance.

6.1 Applicants and licensees shall pay the following fees:

- (a) Initial license—resident—\$100
non-resident—\$200
- (b) Renewal—resident—\$125.00
non-resident—\$225.00

6.2 A license is valid for five years from the date of issuance.

6.3 A license is valid only for the individual identified on the license and is not transferable.

6.4 A licensee who fails to renew his/her license within one year of the date of expiration must reapply and meet all the qualifications set forth in Section 5 of this rule.

6.5 The Department may place special conditions on the license which it deems appropriate or necessary. The Department may also waive or dispense with any requirement of this rule when the Department deems it to be in the public interest to do so.

7.0 Leashed Tracking Dog License; Suspension or Revocation.

A license issued pursuant to this rule shall be revoked concurrently with all other licenses upon conviction of a violation of Vermont Fish and Wildlife law pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 4502.

(Added 1996, Fish and Wildlife Commissioner's Reg. No. 1015, eff. Sept. 5, 1996.)

Responsiveness Summary

for

Public Comments Received

on proposed changes to

- **10 App. V.S.A. § 2, Report, big game,**
- **10 App. V.S.A. § 2a, Big game; tagging,**
- **10 App. V.S.A. § 5, Bow and arrow and crossbow standards**
- **10 App. V.S.A. § 12, Leashed tracking dogs**



Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department
Agency of Natural Resources
1 National Life Drive, Davis 2
Montpelier, VT 05620-3208

Introduction

During the October 15, 2025 Board meeting, the Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) presented proposed changes to 10 App. V.S.A. § 2, Report, big game, 10 App. V.S.A. § 2a, Big game; tagging, and 10 App. V.S.A. § 5, Bow and arrow and crossbow standards. The Board made a first vote approving the proposed changes to Sections 2 and 2a, and voted to approve changes to Section 5 during the December 17, 2025 meeting following additional discussion of the appropriate terminology for crossbow components. On December 17, 2025, the Board also reviewed and made a first vote approving proposed changes to 10 App. V.S.A. § 12, Leashed tracking dogs. The Department proposed further revisions to Section 2a, Big Game; Tagging, during the May 20, 2026 Board meeting, at which point the Board conducted another first vote approving the additional revisions to the language. All four rules were filed with the Interagency Committee on Administrative Rules (ICAR), and were approved by ICAR on June 8, 2026.

The four rules were placed on public notice on June 16, 2026, and a public hearing was held to solicit feedback in Barre, Vermont on July 17, 2026. Two public comments were submitted, which have been summarized and attached here (**Appendix A**). No substantial arguments were raised during the public comment period against the proposed rule changes.

- The proposed changes to 10 App. V.S.A. § 2, *Report, big game*, explicitly prohibit making false statements in the reporting of wild game taken, allows the Commissioner of Fish and Wildlife to pay a fee of at least one dollar per report to agents at authorized reporting stations, and makes minor technical updates to the citations in the rule. The Department currently is authorized to reimburse authorized check-station agents one dollar per report; this reimbursement has not increased since 1971 and the proposed language is intended to give the Department the ability to increase the reimbursement amount, incentivizing the continued operation of check-stations.
- The proposed changes to 10 App. V.S.A. § 2a, *Big game; tagging*, are intended to clarify the big game tagging requirements regarding required tag information, requirements for individuals taking game on their own land, and tagging requirements for the transportation of animal parts. The proposed rule language requires that all big game carcasses are tagged with a tag that contains the name of the hunter, and the applicable tag or permit number. This information is necessary for appropriate enforcement of license and permitting requirements.
- The proposed changes to 10 App. V.S.A. § 5, *Bow and arrow and crossbow standards*, continue to require the same arrowhead width and cutting edges, but apply the standards to broadheads used with crossbows as well.
- The proposed changes to 10 App. V.S.A. § 12, *Leashed tracking dogs*, amends the definition of "big game animal" to be consistent with the definition in 10 V.S.A. § 4001, to include all big game animals including moose. This will allow hunters to employ leashed tracking dogs to legally track dead or wounded moose. And the proposed amendment strikes the language limiting tracking to big game seasons and the 24-hour period immediately following. This will allow for the use of tracking dogs to locate animals injured or killed outside the legal hunting seasons.

Emailed Comments

Two public comments on the proposed rule changes were submitted via email. Those comments and responses are summarized here:

Comment 1: What are the biological and management consequences of false reports of big game take?

Response: Accurate reports of animals taken allow the Department to produce accurate harvest reports, and subsequently develop accurate population estimates for a given species. The specific language in the Reporting Rule banning false reports also gives the Department clear enforcement authority when a false report is submitted. This is particularly important when hunters are applying for second buck tags, the issuance of which is contingent on the harvest of a buck of a certain size and an antlerless deer.

Comment 2: How does maintaining a clear chain of identification from harvest to reporting improve the biological data used for wildlife management and conservation?

Response: The big game tagging requirements are primarily intended to facilitate enforcement of hunting violations, when a hunter takes an animal outside of the allowable season, with improper implements, or without the proper tag. The tagging requirements are not intended to improve biological data collection.

Comment 3: What conservation or wildlife management objectives are the bow and arrow standards intended to achieve?

Response: The standards for arrowheads and broadheads are intended to promote ethical harvest and reduce wounding and injuring of animals.

Comment 4: Has the Department considered potential effects, positive or negative, that expanded use of leashed tracking dogs could have on other wildlife sharing those landscapes, such as waterfowl, ground-nesting birds, or other sensitive species. If so, how are those broader ecosystem considerations evaluated alongside the primary objective of improving recovery of wounded big game?

Response: The Department has not considered these concerns as the use of leashed tracking dogs is not widespread on the landscape, and the limited increase in use is not anticipated to impact other species in a significant way.

Comment 5: The Safari Club International supports all proposed changes to the Wildlife Rules.

Appendix A

Public Comments Received

From: Andrew Shannon [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 12:12 PM
To: ANR - FW Public Comment
Subject: Questions Regarding Public Hearing On Proposed Regulation Changes- July 17

You don't often get email from a.shannon921@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Good afternoon,

I hope this email finds you all well.

Thank you for providing the opportunity for the public to comment on the proposed Fish & Wildlife Board regulation amendments.

As someone who has always had a deep appreciation for Vermont's wildlife, and an increasingly growing interest in wildlife conservation and management, I've been reading through the proposed changes in an effort to better understand the conservation principles behind them.

At this point, I am less interested in advocating for or against the proposed amendments than in learning how wildlife science translates into wildlife management policy. I believe understanding the reasoning behind these decisions is just as important as understanding the regulations themselves. With that in mind, I was hoping to ask a few questions regarding the proposed changes. If these questions are better addressed during the July 17 public hearing, I completely understand and look forward to attending.

10 App. V.S.A. § 2 – Report, Big Game:

Given how heavily wildlife management relies on harvest reporting data, what are the broader biological and management consequences when false information is submitted? More broadly, how do these proposed amendments help protect the integrity of the data that ultimately guides population estimates and future wildlife management decisions?

10 App. V.S.A. § 2a – Big Game Tagging:

These tagging requirements appear to assist with enforcement while also strengthening the integrity of the harvest reporting process. Beyond accountability, how does maintaining a clear chain of identification from harvest to reporting improve the biological data used for wildlife management and conservation?

10 App. V.S.A. § 5 – Bow and Arrow and Crossbow Standards:

I understand that the proposed amendment extends the existing broadhead standards to crossbows as well. From the Department's perspective, what conservation or wildlife management objectives are these standards intended to achieve? Are they primarily intended to promote ethical harvest, reduce wounding loss, improve animal welfare, or some combination of those factors?

10 App. V.S.A. § 12 – Leashed Tracking Dogs:

From a conservation standpoint, I understand that recovering wounded game is an important ethical objective. As someone becoming increasingly interested—and increasingly involved—in Vermont's wetland ecosystems and wildlife as a whole, I'm also curious whether the Department considers potential effects, positive or negative, that expanded use of leashed tracking dogs could have on other wildlife sharing those landscapes, such as waterfowl,

ground-nesting birds, or other sensitive species. If so, how are those broader ecosystem considerations evaluated alongside the primary objective of improving recovery of wounded big game?

I appreciate the time and effort that goes into developing these regulations and reviewing public input. Regardless of whether these questions are answered by email or during the public hearing, my hope is simply to gain a better understanding of the biological, ethical, and conservation principles guiding these proposed amendments so that I can become a more informed steward of Vermont's wildlife and natural resources.

Thank you for your time, and I hope to attend the hearing on July 17.

Respectfully,

Andrew Shannon

From: Ragosta, Christian <CRagosta@scifirstforhunters.org>
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2026 9:59 AM
To: ANR - FW Public Comment
Subject: SCI Letter of Support- 10 App. V.S.A. § 2, 2A, 5, and 12
Attachments: Letter of Support- 10 App. V.S.A. § 2, 2A, 5, and 12.pdf

You don't often get email from cragosta@scifirstforhunters.org. [Learn why this is important](#)

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Please accept this letter of support from Safari Club International in support of proposed regulation changes 10 App. V.S.A. § 2, 2A, 5, and 12.

Sincerely,
Christian Ragosta



Christian Ragosta
State and Local Liaison

Cell: (315) 657-1215

cragosta@scifirstforhunters.org
[www. safariclub.org](http://www.safariclub.org)

Confidentiality Notice This e-mail message, including any attachments, is for the sole use of the intended recipient(s) and may contain confidential and privileged information. Any unauthorized review, use, disclosure, or distribution is prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact the sender by reply e-mail and destroy all copies of the original message.



July 20, 2026

10 App. V.S.A. § 2, 2A, 5, and 12

C/O ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov

Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department

1 National Life Drive

Davis 2

Montpelier, VT 05620-3702

Re: 10 App. V.S.A. § 2, 2A, 5, and 12 | Fish and Wildlife regulations comments

Dear Fish and Wildlife Board:

On behalf of Safari Club International, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed regulation changes to 10 App. V.S.A. § 2, 2A, 5, and 12, fish and wildlife regulations.

The proposed changes to fish and wildlife regulations demonstrate responsible and sustainable management of wildlife while maintaining high levels of opportunity for hunters. SCI believes that sound science-based conservation involving hunting as the primary management tool, while maximizing opportunities for all huntable species is necessary to the long-term health of wildlife. Hunters have long paid the way for conservation, both game and non-game wildlife, and maximizing opportunity for hunting is also key to long-term funding for all conservation. Hunting benefits all wildlife conservation.

10 App. V.S.A. § 2 and 2A support the role in which hunters play in supporting science-based decisions for wildlife management. Without appropriate information gathered throughout the harvest, Vermont's Fish and Wildlife biologists and wildlife experts cannot make scientifically informed decisions to protect our game species. A marginal cost to hunter check-ins will help maintain the existence of those field stations and the gathering of necessary information will make this process more reliable and relevant.

10 App. V.S.A. § 5 supports the ethical take and harvest of game by conforming archery regulations between bows and crossbows. 10 App. V.S.A. § 12 further extolls the ethical virtues of hunters in the community's desire to take responsibility in finding injured or lost game animals and giving them an appropriate window of time to find their harvest with tracking dogs and minimizing any potential waste.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the proposed rule changes for Fall 2026 and Winter 2027. SCI is dedicated to protecting the freedom to hunt and we appreciate the partnership with the Agency and the Department. SCI is always first for hunters.

Sincerely,

W. Laird Hamberlin, CEO – Safari Club International

Safari Club International – Washington DC Office

501 2nd Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002 • Tel 202 543 8733 • www.safariclub.org

(802) 828-2863

MEMORANDUM

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Primary Contact: Hannah Smith, Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, 1 National Life Drive, Davis 2, Montpelier Vermont, 05620 Tel: 802-461-8187 Fax: 802-828-1250 E-Mail: hannah.smith@vermont.gov

Secondary Contact: John Austin, Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, 1 National Life Drive, Davis 2, Montpelier Vermont, 05620 Tel: 802-371-9895 Fax: 802-828-1250 E-Mail: john.austin@vermont.gov.

URL: <https://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/about-us/fish-and-wildlife-board/board-rules>

From: APA Coordinator, VSARA

RE: 10 App. V.S.A. § 12, Leashed tracking dogs.

Date 07/30/2026

We received Proposed Rule on 06/12/2026
Final Proposed Rule on 07/30/2026
Adopted Rule on

We have assigned the following rule number(s):

Proposed Rule Number: 26P017

Adopted Rule Number:

(Final Proposals are not assigned a new number; they retain the Proposed Rule Number.)

The following problems were taken care of by phone/should be taken care of immediately: Proposed Filing, the hearings were not in compliance with 3 V.S.A. § 837, new hearing information requested.

We cannot accept this filing until the following problems are taken care of:

The ad for this proposed rule appeared/will appear in newspapers of record on 06/25/2026 & / / .

This rule takes effect on

Adoption Deadline: 02/12/2027

Please note:

If you have any questions, please call me at 828-2863. OR
E-Mail me at: sos.statutoryfilings@vermont.gov

cc: Lindsey Schreier; Megan Cannella

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE
VERMONT STATE ARCHIVES & RECORDS ADMINISTRATION (VSARA)
(802) 828-2863

TO:	Seven Days Legals (legals@sevendaysvt.com)	Tel: (802) 865-1020 x110.
	The Caledonian Record (adv@caledonian-record.com)	Tel: 748-8121 FAX: 748-1613
	Times Argus / Rutland Herald Classified Ads (classified.ads@rutlandherald.com)	Tel: 802-747-6121 ext 2238 FAX: 802-776-5600
	The Valley News (advertising@vnews.com)	Tel: 603-298-8711 FAX: 603-298-0212
	The Addison Independent (legals@addisonindependent.com)	Tel: 388-4944 FAX: 388-3100 Attn: Display Advertising
	The Bennington Banner / Brattleboro Reformer Lylah Wright (lwright@reformer.com)	Tel: 254-2311 ext. 132 FAX: 447-2028 Attn: Lylah Wright
	The Chronicle (ads@bartonchronicle.com)	Tel: 525-3531 FAX: 525-3200
	Herald of Randolph (ads@ourherald.com)	Tel: 728-3232 FAX: 728-9275 Attn: Brandi Comette
	Newport Daily Express (jlafoe@newportvermontdailyexpress.com)	Tel: 334-6568 FAX: 334-6891 Attn: Jon Lafoe
	News & Citizen (mike@stowereporter.com)	Tel: 888-2212 FAX: 888-2173
	St. Albans Messenger Legals (legals@samessenger.com ; cfoley@orourkemediagroup.com)	Tel: 524-9771 ext. 117 FAX: 527-1948 Attn: Legals
	The Islander (islander@vermontislander.com)	Tel: 802-372-5600 FAX: 802-372-3025
	Vermont Lawyer (hunter.press.vermont@gmail.com)	Attn: Will Hunter
	VT Digger (legals@vtdigger.org)	Attn: Legals

FROM: APA Coordinator, VSARA

Date of Fax: July 30, 2026

RE: The "Proposed State Rules " ad copy to run on

June 25, 2026

PAGES INCLUDING THIS COVER MEMO:

2

***NOTE* 8-pt font in body. 12-pt font max. for headings - single space body. Please include dashed lines where they appear in ad copy. Otherwise minimize the use of white space. Exceptions require written approval.**

If you have questions, or if the printing schedule of your paper is disrupted by holiday etc. please contact VSARA at 802-828-3700, or E-Mail sos.statutoryfilings@vermont.gov, Thanks.

PROPOSED STATE RULES

By law, public notice of proposed rules must be given by publication in newspapers of record. The purpose of these notices is to give the public a chance to respond to the proposals. The public notices for administrative rules are now also available online at <https://secure.vermont.gov/SOS/rules/>. The law requires an agency to hold a public hearing on a proposed rule, if requested to do so in writing by 25 persons or an association having at least 25 members.

To make special arrangements for individuals with disabilities or special needs please call or write the contact person listed below as soon as possible.

To obtain further information concerning any scheduled hearing(s), obtain copies of proposed rule(s) or submit comments regarding proposed rule(s), please call or write the contact person listed below. You may also submit comments in writing to the Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules, State House, Montpelier, Vermont 05602 (802-828-2231).

NOTE: The two rules below have been promulgated by the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board, who has requested the notices be combined to facilitate savings for the agency. When contacting the agency about these rules please note the title and rule number of the proposed rule(s) you are interested in.

- 10 V.S.A. Appendix § 2, Report, Big Game
Vermont Proposed Rule: **26P014**
- 10 V.S.A. Appendix § 2a, Big Game; Tagging
Vermont Proposed Rule: **26P015**

AGENCY: Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board

CONCISE SUMMARY: These proposed rule amendments both relate to the specific requirements that all hunters must comply with immediately upon taking a big game animal, regardless of species. Tagging and reporting are both critical elements of identifying and tracking a big game animal taken by a hunter. The amendments to rules 10 V.S.A. Appendix § 2, Report, Big Game; and 10 V.S.A. Appendix § 2a Big Game; Tagging strengthen reporting and tagging rules for big game. They explicitly prohibit false statements in reporting of wild game taken, update citations, and authorize the Fish and Wildlife Commissioner to pay at least \$1 per report to reporting stations—with flexibility to increase this long-standing reimbursement to sustain and incentivize station operations. They also clarify tagging requirements by mandating that all big game carcasses are tagged with a tag containing the hunter's name and applicable tag or permit number, and by specifying rules for game taken on one's own land and tagging requirements for transporting animal parts. Additionally, the two rules impact the same group of stakeholders: any and all big game hunters in the state of Vermont.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Hannah Smith, Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, 1 National Life Drive, Davis 2 Montpelier, Vermont 05620-3208 Tel: 802-461-8187 Fax: 802-828-1250 E- Mail:

hannah.smith@vermont.gov URL: <https://vtfishandwildlife.com/about-us/fish-and-wildlife-board/board-rules>.

FOR COPIES: John Austin, Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, 1 National Life Drive, Montpelier, Vermont 05620-3208 Tel: 802-371-9895 Fax: 802-828-1250 E-Mail: john.austin@vermont.gov.

10 App. V.S.A. § 5, Bow and arrow and crossbow standards.

Vermont Proposed Rule: 26P016

AGENCY: Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board

CONCISE SUMMARY: The proposed amendments continue to require the same arrowhead width and cutting edges, but apply the standards to broadheads used with crossbows as well.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Hannah Smith, Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, 1 National Life Drive, Davis 2 Montpelier, Vermont 05620-3208 Tel: 802-461-8187 Fax: 802-828-1250 E- Mail:

hannah.smith@vermont.gov URL: <https://vtfishandwildlife.com/about-us/fish-and-wildlife-board/board-rules>.

FOR COPIES: John Austin, Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, 1 National Life Drive, Montpelier, Vermont 05620-3208 Tel: 802-371-9895 Fax: 802-828-1250 E-Mail: john.austin@vermont.gov.

10 App. V.S.A. § 12. Leashed tracking dogs.

Vermont Proposed Rule: 26P017

AGENCY: Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board

CONCISE SUMMARY: The proposed rule amendments make two changes to the existing leashed tracking dog rule: it amends the definition of "big game animal" to be consistent with the definition in 10 V.S.A. § 4001, to include all big game animals including moose. This will allow hunters to employ leashed tracking dogs to legally track dead or wounded moose. And the proposed amendment strikes the language limiting tracking to big game seasons and the 24-hour period immediately following. This will allow for the use of tracking dogs to locate animals injured or killed outside the legal hunting seasons.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Hannah Smith, Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, 1 National Life Drive, Davis 2 Montpelier, Vermont 05620-3208 Tel: 802-461-8187 Fax: 802-828-1250 E- Mail:

hannah.smith@vermont.gov URL: <https://vtfishandwildlife.com/about-us/fish-and-wildlife-board/board-rules>.

FOR COPIES: John Austin, Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, 1 National Life Drive, Montpelier, Vermont 05620-3208 Tel: 802-371-9895 Fax: 802-828-1250 E-Mail: john.austin@vermont.gov.
