

1 H.361

2 Introduced by Representative Fisher of Lincoln

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

5 Subject: Commerce and trade; companion currency; Vermont dollars

6 Statement of purpose: This bill proposes to require the secretary of commerce
7 and community development to contract with a nonprofit corporation to
8 develop and introduce into the state economy a companion currency to be
9 called Vermont dollars.

10 An act relating to Vermont dollars

11 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

12 Sec. 1. 10 V.S.A. chapter 30 is added to read:

13 CHAPTER 30. VERMONT DOLLARS

14 § 699c. PURPOSE

15 The purpose of introducing a companion currency into the Vermont
16 economy is to increase local lending, employment, trade, food distribution,
17 housing, and the related collection of taxes, at a time when the scarcity of
18 United States currency is negatively affecting these economic activities. The
19 companion currency is not intended to replace Vermont's need for or use of
20 United States-issued currency but rather to complement it.

1 § 699d. VERMONT DOLLARS

2 (a) The secretary of commerce and community development shall contract
3 with a nonprofit corporation to develop and introduce into the state economy a
4 companion currency to be called Vermont dollars. The nonprofit corporation
5 shall operate independently of state and municipal entities.

6 (b) Vermont dollars shall be a legally issued companion currency that is
7 exchanged by checks, drafts, and bills in various denominations. It shall be
8 issued, controlled, and managed by the nonprofit corporation that enters into a
9 contract with the secretary under this section.

10 (c) Vermont dollars shall be issued as noninterest bearing-loans to
11 members of the Vermont dollars organization with repayment in Vermont
12 dollars on or before December 31, 2015. They shall not earn interest when
13 they accumulate in an account and are not to be lent to others for interest.

14 (d) Members of the Vermont dollars organization may include government
15 entities, for-profit corporations, nonprofit corporations, and individuals,
16 provided they meet financial eligibility criteria established by the secretary of
17 commerce and community development.

18 (e) Vermont dollars shall not be issued in coin or portions of whole dollars.
19 All federal, state, and local taxes stimulated by Vermont dollars' activities
20 shall be paid in United States dollars, and all transactions shall be
21 independently audited.

1 (f) The secretary is authorized to accept grants and donations for the
2 purpose of engaging in activities deemed necessary to carry out the objectives
3 of this section, including hiring a consultant to conduct relevant legal or market
4 research.

5 § 699e. VERMONT DOLLARS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

6 There is created a Vermont dollars advisory committee which shall
7 comprise two senators chosen by the committee on committees; two
8 representatives chosen by the speaker of the house; and the secretary of
9 commerce and community development or his or her designee. The purpose of
10 the committee is to advise the nonprofit entity responsible for Vermont dollars
11 under this chapter. Specifically, the advisory committee shall provide input on
12 the design and implementation of the system of local currency and, after
13 soliciting expert opinions, shall offer recommendations for ensuring the system
14 complies with all relevant federal and state laws. Legislative members are
15 entitled to receive compensation for services and reimbursement of expenses
16 as provided under 2 V.S.A. § 406(a). The advisory committee shall cease to
17 exist on January 31, 2016.

18 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

19 This act shall take effect on passage.