

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry to which was
3 referred House Bill No. 673 entitled “An act relating to Vermont’s outdoor
4 recreation economy” respectfully reports that it has considered the same and
5 recommends that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting
6 clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

7 Sec. 1. VERMONT OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMIC IMPACT
8 STUDY

9 (a) The Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC),
10 in consultation with the Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation,
11 Vermont Trails and Greenways Council (VTGC), and the Vermont Outdoor
12 Business Alliance (VOBA), shall conduct the Vermont Outdoor Recreation
13 Economic Impact Study (the Study).

14 (b) The Study shall evaluate the following:

15 (1) the overall statewide economic impact of outdoor recreation;

16 (2) the county-level economic impact of outdoor recreation across the
17 State;

18 (3) how the economic impacts are distributed across recreational
19 activities and land ownership;

20 (4) the current carrying costs of outdoor recreation asset stewardship;

21 (5) the return on investment in outdoor recreation in Vermont;

1 (6) the top three opportunities for growth in the sector;

2 (7) **how strategic investment into climate resilient adaptation could**
3 **protect Vermont’s outdoor recreation economy;** and

4 (8) recommendations for future investments to maintain and grow
5 Vermont’s outdoor recreation economy.

6 (c) The organizations leading the Study shall hire a consultant to conduct
7 the economic analysis required.

8 (d) The Study may include additional data points as identified by VOREC,
9 VTGC, VOBA, and the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreations. The
10 Study shall also incorporate findings from VOREC’s Move Forward Together
11 Vermont planning process, **including incorporating findings from their**
12 **Statewide inventory of Vermont's accessible recreation assets to make**
13 **recommendations on ensuring equitable access to outdoor recreation for all**
14 **people with a focus on promoting adaptive opportunities, and diversity and**
15 **inclusion for all to access and benefit from Vermont's outdoor spaces.**

16 (e) In fiscal year 2025, the sum of \$200,000.00 is appropriated from the
17 General Fund to the **Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation** to hire the
18 consultant to conduct the economic analysis required under this section.

19 (f) On or before December 15, 2025, VOREC and the Commissioner shall
20 report back to the House Committees on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and
21 Forestry and on Commerce and Economic Development and the Senate

1 Committees on Agriculture and on Economic Development, Housing and
2 General Affairs on the findings of the Study and propose local and State
3 investment opportunities to bolster the economic benefit of the outdoor
4 recreation economy.

5 Sec. 2. POSITION; VERMONT TRAILS AND GREENWAYS COUNCIL

6 In fiscal year 2025, the sum of \$100,000.00 is appropriated from the
7 General Fund to the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation for one full-
8 time program support specialist whose duties shall be to the Vermont Trails
9 and Greenways Council (VTGC) to:

10 (1) administer membership to the VTGC;

11 (2) manage VTGC meetings, activities, operations, and budget;

12 (3) routinely assess the needs of the Vermont trail stewardship
13 community;

14 (4) develop, manage, and deploy technical assistance resources for
15 VTGC members; and

16 (5) execute the VTGC's advisory role to the Agency of Natural
17 Resources, as defined in 10 V.S.A. § 443.

18 Sec. 3. APPROPRIATION

19 In fiscal year 2025, the sum of \$50,000.00 is appropriated from the General
20 Fund to the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation for the purpose of
21 hiring a contractor, in partnership with Vermont Trails and Greenways Council

1 to develop of a set of universal trail best management practices (BMPs). The
2 BMPs shall aggregate existing BMPs from both the Department and nonprofit
3 trail stewardship organizations, with the intent of these BMPs being adopted
4 for the Vermont Trail System to ensure all public access trails are built and
5 maintained to a high standard. These aggregated BMPs may include practices
6 related to:

7 (1) trail planning and design, including permissions, siting, access, and
8 local coordination;

9 (2) trail construction, including permitting, corridor clearing, soil and
10 soil management, stream crossings, wildlife, and safety;

11 (3) trail use and management, including usage guidelines, monitoring,
12 wildlife, and community engagement; and

13 (4) trail maintenance, including planning, permissions, signage, safety,
14 and addressing on-call issues.

15 Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

16 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2024.

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18 (Committee vote: _____)

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Representative _____

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FOR THE COMMITTEE