

Vermont's Flood Safety Act (S.213)

Vermont's historic development pattern has left our communities vulnerable to flooding. Limiting development in high hazard areas, improving dam safety, and supporting our wetlands are essential steps **to improve our collective flood preparedness, climate resilience, and water quality, while significantly decreasing taxpayer-funded flood recovery and the burden on our towns.**

1 River Corridors

The meandering area of a river prone to high-hazard erosive flooding, where 80% of flood-related damages occur, and which is currently largely unregulated.

- ✓ Updates the state river corridor map to identify areas suitable for development in existing settlements.
- ✓ Limits development in the mapped river corridor, avoiding future life safety concerns and property damage, and alleviating municipal administrative burden.
- ✓ Two-year education and outreach effort, and a two-year rule-making period.

2 Wetlands

The area of land saturated with water that serves as a sponge, retaining and slowing floodwaters, filtering and storing sediment, and providing critical habitat for species.

- ✓ Amends the Wetlands Rule to incorporate a 2:1 net gain rule in the permitting process.
- ✓ Requires development and updating of thorough wetlands mapping, valuable for state and municipal planning, as well as tracking wetlands over time.
- ✓ Requires an annual report from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources on the status of the state's wetlands.

3 Floodplains

The area next to a river that fills with floodwaters through inundation-style flooding, where 20% of flood-related damages occur and which is regulated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and enforced by towns.

- ✓ Creates a more climate-appropriate minimum standard for development in National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)-enrolled towns, streamlining state technical assistance resources.
- ✓ Creates a study committee to assess the most effective way to administer the NFIP, in recognition of the complex municipal-state-federal regulatory landscape that is a strain on our towns.

4 Dam Safety

Dams unsafely alter river flows, and with only 2% of Vermont's 1,000+ dams designated as "flood control," many of the remaining dams pose significant flood risk to our communities.

- ✓ Provides the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) with more enforcement authority and creates a Dam Safety Revolving Loan Fund to provide financing for emergency and non-emergency removals and repairs.
- ✓ Transfers jurisdiction of 22 dams under Public Utility Commission (which does not have dam safety engineers) to DEC.
- ✓ Creates a study committee to assess a regional approach to dam emergency operations.



Benefits of Vermont's Flood Safety Act (S.213)



Public Health and Safety

Flooding is Vermont's number one natural hazard and will worsen with climate change.



Decreased Cost of Disasters

Flood recovery costs Vermont taxpayers tens of millions of dollars every year.



Decreased Municipal Burden

Our resource-strained towns are burdened by the patchwork regulatory programs.



Improved Water Quality

River corridor protections, dam removals, and floodplain and wetland restoration all significantly improve Vermont's water quality.

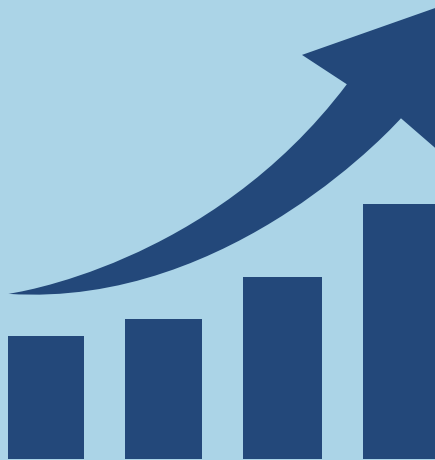


Biodiversity Protection

Improving aquatic systems' functions will support improved habitat for biodiversity gains.

67% 

of Vermonters support limiting development in areas at risk of flooding



61%

of Vermonters think flooding is an extremely or very serious problem

52%

of Vermonters are more worried about flooding now than 5 years ago