

1 * * * Southern Vermont Economic Development Zone * * *

2 Sec. F.2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE

3 (a) The General Assembly finds:

4 (1) the Agency of Commerce and Community Development projects
5 that the forty-four Vermont towns served by the two most Southern regional
6 development corporations and regional planning commission in Vermont will
7 lose 3.5 percent of their population by 2030 and that the total population of
8 individuals over the age of 65 in this combined region will increase from 17
9 percent in 2010 to 30 percent in 2030;

10 (2) the number of visitors to the Southern Vermont visitor center have
11 decreased 25% since 2006;

12 (3) since 2006, growth in the regions' rooms and meals tax since 2006 is
13 10 percent, as compared to 25 percent in the Chittenden County region;

14 (4) the rate of residential construction in the regions is currently half of
15 the pre-recession level;

16 (5) the two Southern Vermont regions have collaborated on business
17 recovery programming after Tropical Storm Irene including development of
18 individualized downtown and village revitalization plans and development of
19 the Southern Vermont Sustainable Marketing program;

20 (6) the two regions having also worked together on some workforce
21 development and internship initiatives, are seeking to establish a more formal
22 structure for their workforce and recruitment efforts; and

23 (b) The purposes of Secs. F.3 and F.4 of this act are:

1 ZONE; STUDY COMMITTEE; REPORT

2 (a) There is created the Southern Vermont Economic Development Zone
3 Study Committee the purpose of which shall be to address the combined
4 decline in the workforce from 2000-2014 within the Southern Vermont
5 Economic Development Zone created in 10 V.S.A. § 8.

6 (b) The Study Committee shall consist of the following members:

7 (A) five members who represent the interests of private investors:

8 (i) one member appointed by the Governor;

9 (ii) two members appointed by the Speaker of the House of
10 Representatives; and

11 (iii) two members appointed by the Senate Committee on
12 Committees;

13 (B) one member each from the Brattleboro Development Credit
14 Corporation and the Bennington County Industrial Corporation; and

15 (C) one member each from the Windham Regional Commission and
16 the Bennington County Regional Commission.

17 (c) On or before November 1, 2015, the Committee shall submit a report to
18 the Secretary of the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, the
19 House Committee on Commerce and Community Development, and the
20 Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs
21 that includes proposals:

22 (1) to establish an integrated investment strategy for retaining businesses
23 within and recruiting business to the Zone;

1 (2) to establish an implementation plan for the Southern Vermont
2 Sustainable Recruitment and Marketing Project created in 2014 and contained
3 in the Windham Region’s federally recognized Comprehensive Economic
4 Development Strategy;

5 (3) to outline the benefits and obstacles within the Zone involved in
6 integrating internship and career exposure programs, workforce development
7 programs, and young professional activities; and

8 (4) to propose an organizational and operational structure of a public-
9 private partnership with the mission of aggregating capital and coordinating
10 investment in small and medium size businesses located within the Zone.

11 (d) Meetings.

12 (1) The first person appointed to the Study Committee shall call the first
13 meeting, to occur on or before August 1, 2015.

14 (2) The Committee shall select a chair from among its members at the
15 first meeting.

16 (3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

17 (4) The Committee shall cease to exist on January 16, 2015.