

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Natural Resources and Energy to which was referred
3 House Bill No. 857 entitled “An act relating to timber harvesting” respectfully
4 reports that it has considered the same and recommends that the Senate
5 propose to the House that the bill be amended as follows:

6 First: In Sec. 6 (Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation; harvest
7 notification report), by striking out “On or before January 1, 2020,” where it
8 appears and inserting in lieu thereof On or before December 15, 2017,

9 Second: By striking out Secs. 7 (sunset of harvest notification pilot
10 program) and 8 (effective dates) and inserting in lieu thereof the following:
11 Sec. 7. 10 V.S.A. § 2613 is amended to read:

12 § 2613. HARVEST NOTIFICATION;~~PILOT PROGRAM~~

13 (a) Findings. The General Assembly finds that:

14 (1) The public will benefit from accountability of persons conducting
15 timber harvests by providing a mechanism for the Department to distribute
16 information and guidance to achieve compliance with existing laws and
17 programs related to harvesting, including Use Value Appraisal eligibility
18 requirements, and those that protect landowners, the environment, and the
19 economy.

1 (2) Enforcement of compliance with the Acceptable Management
2 Practices for Maintaining Water Quality on Logging Jobs in Vermont will be
3 facilitated through notification and documentation of timber harvests.

4 (3) Owners of forestlands will benefit from proactive and timely
5 delivery of guidance and resources that support successful forestry operations,
6 including timber harvesting, provided by the Department, including the
7 Vermont Voluntary Harvesting Guidelines.

8 (4) State knowledge of harvest locations will improve the understanding
9 of factors affecting the forest economy, thereby informing opportunities to
10 support it.

11 (b) Harvest notification; ~~pilot~~. The Commissioner shall establish a harvest
12 notification ~~pilot~~ program under which a landowner of property ~~may~~ shall
13 notify the Commissioner prior to commencement of a timber harvest. The
14 process established by the Commissioner shall allow for a harvest notification
15 by electronic means, telephone, or paper submission.

16 (c) Requested information. The Commissioner shall designate the
17 information to be submitted to the Department in a ~~voluntary~~ harvest
18 notification. The requested information shall contain, at a minimum, the
19 following information:

20 (1) the landowner's name; mailing address; physical address of
21 residence; e-mail address, if any; and telephone number;

1 (2) the name of the logger or contractor conducting the harvest and his
2 or her mailing address; address of the principal place of business or residence;
3 e-mail address, if any; and telephone number.

4 (3) the name of the landowner’s agent or consulting forester, if any, and
5 his or her mailing address; address of the principal place of business or
6 residence; e-mail address, if any; and telephone number;

7 (4) the location of the timber harvest, including the town and the nearest
8 public town highway used to access the timber harvest;

9 (5) the school property account number (SPAN) of the parcel where the
10 timber harvest will occur;

11 (6) the date the timber harvest will commence and the estimated date the
12 harvest will be completed;

13 (7) the estimate of the acreage of the timber harvest area; and

14 (8) whether the parcel where the timber harvest will occur is enrolled in
15 the use value appraisal program.

16 (d) Harvest number; technical assistance. Upon receipt of a complete
17 harvest notification, the Commissioner shall assign a unique harvest number to
18 the timber harvest and shall provide the landowner with technical guidance or
19 information, including: a sample timber sale contract; voluntary harvesting
20 guidelines; guidance on compliance with maintaining water quality protection

1 during a timber harvest; and referral, where applicable, to appropriate natural
2 resource professionals.

3 (e) Confidentiality. Information submitted by a landowner in a ~~voluntary~~
4 harvest notification under this section is confidential and exempt from public
5 inspection under the Public Records Act.

6 Sec. 8. EFFECTIVE DATES

7 (a) This section and Secs. 1 (findings), 2 (policy), 3 (definitions), 4
8 (enforcement), 5 (harvest notification pilot program), and 6 (report on harvest
9 notification pilot program) shall take effect on July 1, 2016.

10 (b) Sec. 7 (mandatory harvest notification) shall take effect on March 1,
11 2018.

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14 (Committee vote: _____)

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Senator _____

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FOR THE COMMITTEE