
This act summary is provided for the convenience of the public and members of the General Assembly. It is intended to provide a general summary of the act and may not be exhaustive. It has been prepared by the staff of the Office of Legislative Council without input from members of the General Assembly. It is not intended to aid in the interpretation of legislation or to serve as a source of legislative intent.

Act No. 77 (S.34). Economic development; rural economic development; agriculture; forestry

An act relating to rural economic development

This act enacts multiple provisions related to rural economic development. The act creates a Rural Economic Development Initiative at the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to facilitate economic development in small towns and rural areas of the State. The act also requires cross-promotion of various State policies in State loan, grant, and other financial assistance programs.

The act requires the Department of Public Service to report to the General Assembly regarding self-administration of the energy efficiency charge by industrial and commercial customers. The report shall recommend a pilot program under which commercial and industrial customers may receive the amount of the efficiency charge in the form of services. The act also requires the Public Service Board when adopting the energy efficiency charge to give due consideration to State energy policy, including the maintenance and enhancement of economic vitality.

The act exempts forestry equipment and repair parts from the sales and use tax. It also caps the air contaminant permit fee for emissions from anaerobic digesters at \$1,000.00. The act clarifies that phosphorus removal technology is eligible for assistance under the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets' capital assistance program.

The act requires the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets to reconvene the Vermont Milk Commission to review recommendations for the 2018 Federal Farm Bill. The act requires the Commissioner of Financial Regulation to study ways to reduce the workers' compensation rates and costs for occupations that have a high risk of workplace injuries, small policyholder pools, and high premiums.

Multiple effective dates, beginning on June 12, 2017