Journal of the House

Wednesday, January 17, 2018

At one o'clock in the afternoon the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. David Sharpe of Bristol and Rep. Kevin Christie of Hartford.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time and referred to committee or placed on the Calendar as follows:

H. 634

By Reps. McCullough of Williston and Townsend of South Burlington,
House bill, entitled
An act relating to shared parental rights and responsibilities and equal parent-child contact;
To the committee on Judiciary.

H. 635

By Reps. Pugh of South Burlington, Dunn of Essex, Haas of Rochester, Houghton of Essex and McFaun of Barre Town,
House bill, entitled
An act relating to establishing the Unused Prescription Drug Repository Program;
To the committee on Human Services.

H. 636

By Rep. Deen of Westminster,
House bill, entitled
An act relating to miscellaneous fish and wildlife subjects;
To the committee on Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife.

H. 637

By Reps. Yacovone of Morristown and Nolan of Morristown,
House bill, entitled
An act relating to reducing by one day a notice period for local development review;
To the committee on Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife.

H. 638

By Reps. Lalonde of South Burlington and Willhoit of St. Johnsbury,
House bill, entitled
An act relating to increasing the number of examiners on the Board of Bar Examiners from nine to 11 members;
To the committee on Judiciary.

H. 639


House bill, entitled
An act relating to banning cost-sharing for all breast imaging services;
To the committee on Health Care.

H. 640

By Reps. Dunn of Essex, Bissonnette of Winooski, Botzow of Pownal, Buckholz of Hartford, Carr of Brandon, Christensen of Weathersfield, Christie of Hartford, Connor of Fairfield, Deen of Westminster, Donovan of Burlington, Gardner of Richmond, Gonzalez of Winooski, Head of South Burlington, Houghton of Essex, Howard of Rutland City, Jessup of Middlesex,
House bill, entitled
An act relating to the right to a hospice consultation;
To the committee on Human Services.

**Senate Bill Referred**

*S. 267*

Senate bill, entitled
An act relating to timing of a decree nisi in a divorce proceeding
Was read and referred to the committee on Judiciary.

**Bill Referred to Committee on Ways and Means**

*H. 573*

House bill, entitled
An act relating to approval of an amendment to the charter of the City of Rutland

Appearing on the Calendar, affecting the revenue of the state, under rule 35(a), was referred to the committee on Ways and Means.

**Bill Referred to Committee on Appropriations**

*H. 549*

House bill, entitled
An act relating to the Petroleum Cleanup Fund

Appearing on the Calendar, carrying an appropriation, under rule 35(a), was referred to the committee on Appropriations.

**Joint Resolution Adopted in Concurrence**

*J.R.S. 41*

By Senator Ashe,

*J.R.S. 41.* Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment.
Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That when the two Houses adjourn on Friday, January 19, 2018, it be to meet again no later than Tuesday, January 23, 2018.

Was taken up, read and adopted in concurrence.

Bill Amended, Read Third Time; Bill Passed

H. 593

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous consumer protection provisions

Was taken up and pending third reading of the bill, Rep. Chesnut-Tangeman of Middletown Springs moved to amend the bill as follows:

By redesignating subsections (i)–(k) to be subsections (j)–(l) and by inserting a new subsection (i) to read:

(i) Plain language. In any written communication or notification to a consumer pursuant to this section, an insurer shall use clear and plain language that is understandable to the average consumer.

Which was agreed to. Thereupon, the bill was read the third time and passed.

Second Reading; Consideration Interrupted

H. 554

Rep. Lefebvre of Newark, for the committee on Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to the regulation of dams

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 10 V.S.A. chapter 43 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 43. DAMS

§ 1079. PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this chapter to protect public safety and provide for the public good through the inventory, inspection, and evaluation of dams in the State.

§ 1080. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

(1) “Department” means the department of environmental conservation
Department of Environmental Conservation.

(2) “Person” means any individual; partnership; company; corporation; association; joint venture; trust; municipality; the state of Vermont or any agency, department, or subdivision of the state; any federal agency or any other legal or commercial entity.

(3) “Person in interest” “Interested person” means, in relation to any dam, a person: who has riparian rights affected by that dam; who has a substantial interest in economic or recreational activity affected by the dam; whose safety would be endangered by a failure of the dam; or who notifies the Department of interest in the dam.

(4) “Engineer” means a professional engineer registered under Title 26 who has experience in the design and investigation of dams.

(5) “Time” shall be reckoned in the manner prescribed by 1 V.S.A. § 138.

(6)(A) “Dam” means any artificial barrier, including its appurtenant works, that is capable of impounding water, other liquids, or accumulated sediments.

(B) “Dam” includes an artificial barrier that meets all of the following:

(i) previously was capable of impounding water, other liquids, or accumulated sediments;

(ii) was partially breached; and

(iii) has not been properly removed or mitigated.

(C) “Dam” shall not mean:

(i) barriers or structures created by beaver or any other wild animal as that term is defined in section 4001 of this title;

(ii) transportation infrastructure that has no normal water storage capacity and that impounds water only during storm events;

(iii) an artificial barrier at a stormwater management structure that is regulated by the Agency of Natural Resources under chapter 47 of this title;

(iv) an underground or elevated tank to store water otherwise regulated by the Agency of Natural Resources;

(v) an agricultural waste storage facility regulated by the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets under 6 V.S.A. chapter 215; or

(vi) any other structure identified by the Department by rule.
§ 1081. JURISDICTION OF DEPARTMENT AND PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

(a) Powers and duties. Unless otherwise provided, the powers and duties authorized by this chapter shall be exercised by the Department, except that the Public Utility Commission shall exercise those powers and duties over dams and projects that relate to or are incident to the generation of electric energy for public use or as a part of a public utility system.

(b) Transfer of jurisdiction. Jurisdiction over a dam is transferred from the Department to the Public Utility Commission whenever the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission grants a license to generate electricity at the dam or whenever the Public Utility Commission receives an application for a certificate of public good for electricity generation at that dam. Jurisdiction is transferred from the Public Utility Commission to the Department whenever such a federal license expires or is otherwise lost, whenever such a certificate of public good is revoked or otherwise lost, or whenever the Public Utility Commission denies an application for a certificate of public good.

(c) Transfer of records. Upon transfer of jurisdiction as set forth in subsection (b) of this section and upon written request, the State agency having former jurisdiction over a dam shall transfer copies of all records pertaining to the dam to the agency acquiring jurisdiction.

§ 1082. AUTHORIZATION

(a) No person shall construct, enlarge, raise, lower, remodel, reconstruct, or otherwise alter any dam, pond, or impoundment or other structure which is or will be capable of impounding more than 500,000 cubic feet of water or other liquid after construction or alteration, or remove, breach, or otherwise lessen the capacity of an existing dam that is or was capable of impounding more than 500,000 cubic feet within or along the borders of this state where land in this state is proposed to be overflowed, or at the outlet of any body of water within this state, unless authorized by the State agency having jurisdiction so to do. However, in the matter of flood control projects where cooperation with the federal government is provided for by the provisions of section 1100 of this title, that section shall control.

(b) For the purposes of this chapter, the volume a dam or other structure is capable of impounding is the volume of water or other liquid, including any accumulated sediments, controlled by the structure with the water or liquid level at the top of the lowest nonoverflow part of the structure.

§ 1083. APPLICATION

(a) Any person who proposes to undertake an action subject to regulation
pursuant to section 1082 of this title shall apply in writing to the State agency having jurisdiction. The application shall set forth:

(1) the location, the height, length, and other dimensions, and any proposed changes to any existing dam;

(2) the approximate area to be overflowed and the approximate number of, or any change in the number of cubic feet of water to be impounded;

(3) the plans and specifications to be followed in the construction, remodeling, reconstruction, altering, lowering, raising, removal, breaching, or adding to;

(4) any change in operation and maintenance procedures; and

(5) other information that the State agency having jurisdiction considers necessary to properly review the application.

(b) The plans and specifications shall be prepared under the supervision of an engineer.

§ 1083a. AGRICULTURAL DAMS

(a) Notwithstanding the provisions of sections 1082, 1083, 1084, and 1086 of this title, the owners of an agricultural enterprise who propose, as an integral and exclusive part of the enterprise, to construct or alter any dam, pond or impoundment or other structure requiring a permit under section 1083 shall apply to the natural resources conservation district in which his land is located. The natural resources conservation districts created under the provisions of chapter 31 of this title shall be the state agency having jurisdiction and shall review and approve the applications in the same manner as would the department. The districts may request the assistance of the department for any investigatory work necessary for a determination of public good and for any review of plans and specifications as provided in section 1086.

(b) As used in this section, “agricultural enterprise” means any farm, including stock, dairy, poultry, forage crop and truck farms, plantations, ranches and orchards, which does not fall within the definition of “activities not engaged in for a profit” as defined in Section 183 of the Internal Revenue Code and regulations relating thereto. The growing of timber does not in itself constitute farming.

(c) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, jurisdiction shall revert to the department when there is a change in use or when there is a change in ownership which affects use. In those cases the department may, on its own motion, hold meetings in order to determine the effect on the public good and public safety. The department may issue an order modifying the terms and
conditions of approval.

(d) The natural resources conservation districts may adopt any rules necessary to administer this chapter. The districts shall adhere to the requirements of chapter 25 of Title 3 in the adoption of those rules.

(e) Notwithstanding the provisions of chapter 7 of Title 3, the attorney general shall counsel the districts in any case where a suit has been instituted against the districts for any decision made under the provisions of this chapter. [Repealed.]

§ 1084. DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE; INVESTIGATION

The commissioner of fish and wildlife shall investigate the potential effects on fish and wildlife habitats of any proposal subject to section 1082 of this title and shall certify the results to the State agency having jurisdiction prior to any hearing or meeting relating to the determination of public good and public safety.

§ 1085. NOTICE OF APPLICATION

Upon receipt of the application required by section 1082 of this title, the State agency having jurisdiction shall give notice to the legislative body of each municipality in which the dam is located and to all persons interested.

(1) The Department shall proceed in accordance with chapter 170 of this title.

(2) For any project subject to its jurisdiction under this chapter, the Public Utilities Commission shall hold a hearing on the application. The purpose of the hearing shall be to determine whether the project serves the public good as defined in section 1086 of this title and provides adequately for the public safety. The hearing shall be held in a municipality in the vicinity of the proposed project and may be consolidated with other hearings, including hearings under 30 V.S.A. § 248 concerning the same project. Notice shall be given at least 10 days before the hearing to interested persons by posting in the municipal offices of the towns in which the project will be completed and by publishing in a local newspaper.

§ 1086. DETERMINATION OF PUBLIC GOOD; CERTIFICATES

(a) “Public good” means the greatest benefit of the people of the State. In determining whether the public good is served, the State agency having jurisdiction shall give due consideration to, among other things, to the effect the proposed project will have on:

(1) the quantity, kind, and extent of cultivated agricultural land that may
be rendered unfit for use by or enhanced by the project, including both the immediate and long-range agricultural land use impacts;

(2) scenic and recreational values;

(3) fish and wildlife;

(4) forests and forest programs;

(5) the need for a minimum water discharge flow rate schedule to protect the natural rate of flow and the water quality of the affected waters; [Repealed.]

(6) the existing uses of the waters by the public for boating, fishing, swimming, and other recreational uses;

(7) the creation of any hazard to navigation, fishing, swimming, or other public uses;

(8) the need for cutting clean and removal of all timber or tree growth from all or part of the flowage area;

(9) the creation of any public benefits;

(10) the classification, if any, of the affected waters under chapter 47 of this title attainment of the Vermont water quality standards;

(11) any applicable State, regional, or municipal plans;

(12) municipal grand lists and revenues;

(13) public safety; and

(14) in the case of the proposed removal of a dam that formerly related to or was incident to the generation of electric energy, but which that was not subject to a memorandum of understanding dated prior to January 1, 2006 relating to its removal, the potential for and value of future power production.

(b) If the State agency having jurisdiction finds that the proposed project will serve the public good, and, in case of any waters designated by the Secretary as outstanding resource waters, will preserve or enhance the values and activities sought to be protected by designation, the agency shall issue its order approving the application. The order shall include conditions for minimum stream flow to protect fish and instream aquatic life attainment of water quality standards, as determined by the Agency of Natural Resources, and such other conditions as the agency having jurisdiction considers necessary to protect any element of the public good listed in subsection (a) of this section. Otherwise it shall issue its order disapproving the application.

(c) The Agency State agency having jurisdiction shall provide the applicant and interested parties persons with copies of its order.
In the case of a proposed removal of a dam that is under the jurisdiction of the Department and that formerly related to or was incident to the generation of electric energy but that was not subject to a memorandum of understanding dated before January 1, 2006 relating to its removal, the Department shall consult with the Department of Public Service regarding the potential for and value of future power production at the site.

§ 1087. REVIEW OF PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Upon receipt of an application, the state for any proposal subject to authorization under section 1082, the State agency having jurisdiction shall employ a registered engineer experienced in the design and investigation of dams to investigate the property, review the plans and specifications, and make additional investigations as the State agency having jurisdiction considers necessary to ensure that the project adequately provides for the public safety. The engineer shall report his or her findings to the agency.

§ 1089. EMPLOYMENT OF HYDRAULIC ENGINEER

With the approval of the governor, the State agency having jurisdiction may employ a competent hydraulic engineer to investigate the property, review the plans and specifications, and make such additional investigation as such the State agency shall deem necessary, and such engineer shall report to the State agency his or her findings in respect thereto.

§ 1090. CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISION

The construction, alteration, or other action authorized in section 1086 of this title shall be supervised by a registered engineer employed by the applicant. Upon completion of the authorized project, the engineer shall certify to the agency having jurisdiction that the project has been completed in conformance with the approved plans and specifications.

§ 1095. UNSAFE DAM; PETITION; HEARING; EMERGENCY

(a) On receipt of a petition signed by not less no fewer than ten persons in interest or the legislative body of a municipality, the State agency having jurisdiction shall, or upon its own motion it may, institute investigations by an engineer as described in section 1087 of this title regarding the safety of any existing dam or portion of a dam of any size. The agency may fix a time and place for hearing and shall give notice in the manner it directs to all persons interested. The engineer shall present his or her findings and recommendations at the hearing. After the hearing, if the agency finds that the dam or portion of the dam as maintained or operated is unsafe or is a menace to people or property above or below the dam, it shall issue an order directing reconstruction, repair, removal, breaching, draining, or
other action it considers necessary to make the dam safe, improve the safety of the dam sufficiently to protect life and property as required by the State agency having jurisdiction.

(b) If, upon the expiration of such date as may be ordered, the owner of the dam or the owner of the land on which the dam is located has not complied with the order directing the reconstruction, repair, breaching, removal, draining, or other action of such unsafe dam, the State agency having jurisdiction may petition the Superior Court in the county in which the dam is located to enforce its order or exercise the right of eminent domain to acquire the rights as that may be necessary to effectuate a remedy as the public safety or public good may require. If the order has been appealed, the court may prohibit the exercise of eminent domain by the State agency having jurisdiction pending disposition of the appeal.

(c) If, upon completion of the investigation described in subsection (a) of this section, the State agency having jurisdiction considers the dam to present an imminent threat to human life or property, it shall take whatever action it considers necessary to protect life and property and subsequently conduct the hearing described in subsection (a) of this section.

§ 1097. SURVEY OF EXISTING DAMS; ORDERS FOR PROTECTION OF SALMON

The Fish and Wildlife Board shall forthwith make a survey of all dams within the state which impound more than three hundred thousand cubic feet of water and determine if the operation of such dams adversely affects the propagation and preservation of salmon, or materially diminishes the amount of flow in portions of a stream likely to be used for such preservation and propagation of salmon. If the Board determines that the operation of an existing dam adversely affects the propagation and preservation of salmon or materially diminishes the flow of water over portions of stream likely to be used therefor, it shall order such changes in operation for such length of time or times as are reasonably necessary in its judgment to fully protect such preservation and propagation of salmon. Any order of the board made under this section shall be based upon facts found and stated. Appeal from an order of the board may be taken in the manner prescribed for appeals from the Public Utility Commission as provided in 30 V.S.A. chapter 1. [Repealed.]

§ 1098. REMOVAL OF OBSTRUCTIONS; APPROPRIATION

The department may contract for the removal of sandbars, debris, or other obstructions from streams which the department finds that while so obstructed may be a menace in time of flood, or endanger property or life below, or the
property of riparian owners. The expense of investigation and removal of the obstruction shall be paid by the state from funds provided for that purpose. [Repealed.]

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§ 1105. INSPECTION OF DAMS

(a) Inspection; schedule. All nonfederal dams in the State shall be inspected according to a schedule adopted by rule by the State agency having jurisdiction over the dam.

(b) Dam inspection. A nonfederal dam in the State shall be inspected under one or both of the following methods:

(1) The State agency having jurisdiction shall over a dam may employ an engineer to make periodic inspections of nonfederal dams in the State to determine their condition and the extent, if any, to which they pose a potential possible or actual probable threat to life and property, or

(2) The State agency having jurisdiction shall adopt rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 to require an adequate level of inspection by an independent registered engineer experienced in the design and investigation of dams. The agency shall provide the owner with the findings of the inspection and any recommendations.

(c) Dam safety reports. If a dam inspection report is completed by the State agency having jurisdiction, the agency shall provide the person owning legal title to the dam or the owner of the land on which the dam is located with a copy of the inspection report.

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§ 1107. HAZARD POTENTIAL CLASSIFICATIONS

(a) The State agency having jurisdiction over a dam listed in the Vermont Dam Inventory shall assess the hazard potential classification of the dam based on the potential loss of human life, property damage, and economic loss that would occur in the event of the failure of the dam. There shall be four hazard potential classifications: high, significant, low, and minimal.

(b) The State agency having jurisdiction over a dam on the Vermont Dam Inventory may assess or reassess the hazard potential classification of a dam at any time.

§ 1108. DAM INVENTORY; REGISTRATION

(a) Dam inventory. The Department of Environmental Conservation shall maintain a current inventory of all known dams in the State of Vermont. The
Department of Environmental Conservation shall update and publish the Vermont Dam Inventory annually and shall include information collected in the Inventory as part of the Agency of Natural Resources’ Natural Resources Atlas.

(b) Dam registration. If a dam is listed on the Vermont Dam Inventory and is under the jurisdiction of the Department, the person owning legal title to a dam or the person owning the land on which the dam is located shall, upon request of the Department, submit information to the Department regarding the dam, including the condition of the dam, whether and when the dam has been inspected, and any other information that the Department may require to ensure public safety. A person who fails to comply with the request of the Department under this section shall be subject to a civil penalty under chapter 201 of this title.

(c) Rulemaking. The Department may adopt rules regarding the information collection requirements of this section, including the mechanism for registration, the frequency of registration, the type of information to be collected, and whether the location of a dam on a property must be recorded in the land records of the municipality in which it is located.

§ 1109. MARKETABILITY OF TITLE

The failure of the person owning legal title to a dam or the owner of the land on which the dam is located to record a dam registration or a dam inspection report when required under this chapter or rules adopted under this chapter shall not create an encumbrance on record title or an effect on marketability of title for the real estate property or properties on which the dam is located.

§ 1110. RULEMAKING

The Commissioner of Environmental Conservation shall adopt rules to implement the requirements of this chapter for dams under the jurisdiction of the Department. The rules shall include:

(1) a standard or regulatory threshold under which a dam is exempt from the registration or inspection requirements of this chapter;

(2) standards for:

(A) the siting, design, construction, reconstruction, enlargement, modification, or alteration of a dam;

(B) operation and maintenance of a dam;

(C) inspection, monitoring, record keeping, and reporting;

(D) repair, breach, or removal of a dam; and
(E) application for authorization under section 1082 of this title.

(3) requirements for the development of an emergency action plan for a dam, including guidance on how to develop an emergency action plan, the content of a plan, and when and how an emergency action plan should be updated;

(4) criteria for the hazard potential classification of dams in the State;

(5) a process by which a person owning legal title to a dam or a person owning the land on which the dam is located shall register a dam; and

(6) requirements for the person owning legal title to a dam or the person owning the land on which the dam is located to conduct inspections of the dam.

§ 1111. NATURAL RESOURCES ATLAS; DAM STATUS

Annually on or before January 1, the Public Utility Commission shall submit to the Department updated inventory information from the previous calendar year for dams under the jurisdiction of the Public Utility Commission.

Sec. 2. DAM REGISTRATION PROGRAM REPORT

On or before January 1, 2023, the Department of Environmental Conservation shall submit a report to the House Committees on Natural Resources, Fish, and Wildlife and on Ways and Means and the Senate Committees on Natural Resources and Energy and on Finance. The report shall contain:

(1) an evaluation of the dam registration program under 10 V.S.A. chapter 43;

(2) a recommendation on whether to modify the fee structure of the dam registration program;

(3) a summary of the dams registered under the program, organized by amount of water impounded and hazard potential classification; and

(4) an evaluation of any other dam safety concerns related to dam registration.

Sec. 3. ADOPTION OF RULES

The Secretary of Natural Resources shall adopt the rules required under 10 V.S.A. § 1110 as follows:

(1) the rules required under 10 V.S.A. § 1110(1) (exemptions), § 1110(3) (emergency action plan), § 1110(4) (hazard potential classification), § 1110(5) (dam registration), and § 1110(6) (dam inspection) shall be adopted
on or before July 1, 2020; and

(2) the rules required under 10 V.S.A. § 1110(2) (dam design standards) shall be adopted on or before July 1, 2022.

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2018.

Recess

At two o'clock and twenty-one minutes in the afternoon, the Speaker declared a recess until the fall of the gavel.

At two o'clock and forty-three minutes in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Consideration Resumed; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 554

Consideration resumed on House bill, entitled

An act relating to the regulation of dams

Thereupon, the report of the committee on Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife agreed to and third reading ordered.

Adjournment

At two o'clock and fifty-seven minutes in the afternoon, on motion of Rep. Turner of Milton, the House adjourned until tomorrow at one o'clock in the afternoon.