

S.276. An Act Relating to Rural Economic Development

Major Changes Between Proposals by the Committees on Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Finance

Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI)

- Senate Agriculture proposed amendments to the REDI Program.
- Senate Natural and Senate Finance did not propose changes to the Senate Agriculture proposal.

Sec. 2. Outdoor Recreation Friendly Community Program

- Senate Agriculture proposed establishment of an Outdoor Recreation Friendly Community Program to provide incentives for communities to leverage outdoor recreation assets to foster economic growth.
- Senate Natural and Senate Finance did not propose changes to the Senate Agriculture proposal.

Act 250 Treatment of Trails

- Senate Agriculture proposed amending Act 250 to provide consistency of review of trail construction.
- Senate Natural proposed removal of the amendments to Act 250.

Act 250 and Sawmills

- Senate Agriculture proposed that sawmills undergoing Act 250 review shall be processed as a minor application if the sawmill produces two million board feet or less annually.
- Senate Natural proposed removal of the amendment to Act 250 for sawmills.

Public Schools; Wood Heat

- Senate Agriculture proposed requiring public schools that use wood for heat to give preference to Vermont suppliers when making fuel purchases.
- Senate Natural proposed removal of the requirement for preference.

Woody Biomass Plants; Wood Supply

- Senate Agriculture proposed requiring woody biomass plants in the state that were commissioned prior to 2009 to use wood from Vermont dealers unless there is inadequate supply in the Vermont markets.
- Senate Natural proposed removal of the section.

BGS Public Buildings; Wood Energy; Vermont Suppliers; Report

- Senate Agriculture proposed a BGS report on the feasibility of requiring State or municipally-owned public buildings to give preference to Vermont suppliers when purchasing wood fuel
- Senate Natural proposed removal of the report.

Self-Administered Energy Efficiency Charge; Energy Savings Accounts

- Senate Agriculture proposed amending the energy savings account program to allow customers located in industrial parks in rural areas to use energy savings accounts.
- Senate Natural Proposed removal of the energy savings account changes.

Use Value Appraisal; Removal of Managed Forestland

- Senate Agriculture proposed changes to how managed forestland is removed from UVA.
- Senate Natural proposed removal of the changes to UVA.

Energy Efficiency Funds; Low-Income Households

- Senate Agriculture proposed that the PUC require a percentage of energy efficiency funds be used to provide efficiency services to customers with household income below 80% of state median income.
- Senate Natural proposed removal of the section.

Department of Public Service; Demand Charge Report

- Senate Agriculture proposed to require the Department of Public Service to report to the General Assembly on electric utility demand charges in Vermont and the effect of these charges on the ability of industrial enterprises to locate in rural towns of the State.
- Senate Natural and Senate Finance did not propose changes.

Wetlands Permit Fees

- Senate Agriculture proposed that a farmer installing a pipeline in a wetland for the purpose of transporting manure for farming shall pay a \$200 permit fee instead of \$0.75 per foot.
- The Senate Natural report proposed removal of this section, but the removal was a drafting error/miscommunication by legislative counsel.

Purchase and Use Tax

- Senate Agriculture proposed that motor vehicles used for forestry or harvesting shall not be subject to the purchase and use tax for motor vehicles.
- Senate Natural did not propose a change. Senate Finance proposed that portable sawmills be removed from the list of vehicles not subject to the purchase and use tax.

Advanced Wood Boilers; Sales Tax; Income Tax Credit

- Senate Agriculture proposed exempting advanced wood boilers from the sales tax and providing an income tax credit for the purchase of advanced wood boilers.
- Senate Finance proposed removal of the sales tax exemption and income tax credit.

Industrial Hemp Program Compliance with Federal Law

- Senate Agriculture proposed changes to the State hemp program to conform with the federal farm bill; to require Agency of Agriculture to conduct testing; to clarify the disposition of hemp with a THC in excess of .3%; and to authorize hemp processing by medical marijuana dispensaries.
- Senate Natural and Senate Finance did not propose changes.

Fire Safety Fees

- Senate Agriculture proposed lowering the cap on fire safety fees and providing the Division of Fire Safety the authority to waive fees.
- Senate Finance proposed removal of the section.

Industrial Park Designation

- Senate Agriculture proposed requiring ACCD to recommend a process for establishing an economic development program under which defined parcels in rural areas of the State are designated as industrial parks for the purposes of providing regulatory and permitting incentives to businesses sited within the industrial park.
- Senate Natural and Senate Finance did not propose changes.