

1 H.763

2 Introduced by Committee on Natural Resources, Fish, and Wildlife

3 Date:

4 Subject: Conservation and development; climate change; greenhouse gases;
5 emission reduction; evaluation of approaches

6 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require the
7 Joint Fiscal Office to conduct a study, with independent professional
8 assistance, on the costs and benefits to Vermont of various approaches to
9 reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and submit a report of its findings
10 to the General Assembly. It also proposes that the Governor have a duty to use
11 existing avenues, such as the Coalition of Northeastern Governors, to advocate
12 for regional and interstate solutions to GHG reduction.

13 An act relating to a study of approaches to greenhouse gas reduction

14 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

15 Sec. 1. GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION; JOINT FISCAL OFFICE;
16 STUDY; REPORT

17 (a) Study. The Joint Fiscal Office shall conduct a study to analyze the
18 fiscal impacts of adopting and implementing various approaches to reducing
19 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions caused by Vermont's consumption of fuels
20 used in transportation, heating, cooling, and ventilation.

1 (1) The study shall evaluate:

2 (A) the costs and benefits for Vermont of applying a carbon charge,
3 including an analysis of similar charges enacted in other jurisdictions, such as
4 British Columbia and Ireland;

5 (B) the costs and benefits for Vermont of a cap-and-trade approach,
6 including an analysis of programs such as the Western Climate Initiative or an
7 expansion of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI); and

8 (C) the costs and benefits for Vermont of other regulatory or market-
9 based approaches that may exist.

10 (2) The study shall compare the approaches evaluated under subdivision
11 (1) of this subsection, including their comparative ability to achieve significant
12 reductions in GHG emissions; impact on economic development, innovation,
13 and job creation in the State; and effect on the cost of living in Vermont.

14 (3) The study shall consider both interstate and Vermont-only
15 approaches to GHG reduction.

16 (4) The study shall evaluate tax incentives and tax structures that may
17 spur economic development and include an analysis of the effects of a
18 regressive carbon tax.

19 (5) The study shall evaluate the feasibility and outcome of expanding
20 RGGI to include emissions from transportation, heating, cooling, and
21 ventilation.

1 (6) The study shall evaluate whether revenues may offset the sales,
2 income, or property tax.

3 (7) The study shall evaluate methods to provide assistance to mitigate
4 effects on Vermonters with low income.

5 (b) Funds. In conducting the study, the Joint Fiscal Office shall retain
6 independent, professional assistance for which up to \$100,000.00 is authorized.
7 Persons retained shall work under the direction of the Joint Fiscal Office.

8 (c) Legislative Council. The Office of Legislative Council shall be
9 available to the Joint Fiscal Office to provide legal assistance.

10 (d) Executive Branch. In conducting this study, the Joint Fiscal Office
11 shall be entitled such assistance and relevant information from the Executive
12 Branch or any agency thereof as the Office considers necessary.

13 (e) Report. On or before January 15, 2019, the Joint Fiscal Office shall
14 submit a report of the study with its findings to the Senate Committees on
15 Finance and on Natural Resources and Energy, the House Committees on
16 Natural Resources, Fish, and Wildlife and on Ways and Means, and the Senate
17 and House Committees on Transportation.

18 Sec. 2. GOVERNOR; ADVOCACY; REGIONAL CARBON SOLUTIONS

19 The Governor or designee shall use all available fora to advocate for
20 regional or interstate solutions to reducing GHG emissions, such as a regional
21 carbon tax or cap-and-trade system. Such fora include the Coalition of

1 Northeastern Governors, the annual conference of New England Governors
2 and Eastern Canadian Premiers and its regional climate change initiative, and
3 the RGGI.

4 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

5 This act shall take effect on passage.