
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. 83 (S.160). Agriculture; development; water quality; carbon sequestration; logger safety; seed review

An act relating to agricultural development

This act enacts or amends multiple provisions related to agricultural development. The Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets (Secretary) shall submit to the General Assembly a report on the stabilization, diversification, and revitalization of the agricultural industry in Vermont. The Secretary of Commerce and Community Development shall contract with a qualified marketing consultant to assess the viability of increasing demand for Vermont dairy products in major metropolitan markets.

The Secretary shall convene a Soil Conservation Practice and Payment for Ecosystem Services Working Group to recommend financial incentives for farmers to implement practices to improve soil health, enhance crop resilience, and reduce runoff. The State Treasurer's authority to issue an affinity card is amended so that any card issued will benefit water quality.

The sunset on the ability of livestock owners to conduct on-farm slaughter without inspection is extended from July 1, 2019 to July 1, 2023. The act clarifies that multiple persons can own an animal slaughtered under the personal use or on-farm slaughter exceptions to inspection. The Secretary shall report to the General Assembly regarding the use of radio frequency identification tags and readers by livestock owners and slaughter facilities.

The Vermont Forest Carbon Sequestration Working Group is created to study how to facilitate enrollment of Vermont forestlands in carbon sequestration markets. The Commissioner of Forests and Parks (Commissioner) shall develop a logging operations accident prevention and safety training curriculum to assist safety instructors. The Commissioner annually shall award grants to logging contractors to reduce the costs of safety training or continuing safety education. The Commissioner shall award to proposed value-added forest products businesses annual grants of up to \$10,000.00 to assist with permitting, consultation, engineering, and other costs of establishing a forest products business.

The act repeals the sunset on the maximum permit fee for manure pipelines in wetlands. The sunset on the sales tax exemption for advanced wood boilers is extended. The act provides that solid waste haulers are only required to offer

food residuals collection services to nonresidential customers and apartment buildings with four or more residential units.

The act requires the Secretary to review the traits of a new genetically engineered seed prior to its sale, distribution, or use in the State. The federal exemptions to the requirements of the pasteurized milk ordinance (PMO) for very small businesses shall not apply in Vermont. The Secretary is authorized to modify by rule the requirements of the PMO for Vermont.

Multiple effective dates, beginning on June 20, 2019