

Sec. 12. GREEN MOUNTAIN STATE FOREST CARBON PILOT  
PROJECT

(a) Findings and purpose.

(1) Vermont's public and private forestlands provide many benefits to the State including ~~access forest products, clean air and water, to outdoor recreation, carbon sequestration, and many other benefits.~~ ~~increased tourism, and helping keep our environment healthy.~~

(2) Private owners of forestlands face increasing financial pressures (higher property taxes, weak forest products markets) that can impact the financial feasibility of holding forested tracts. As the forest landowner population ages and demand for development grows, forest landowners are finding it harder to resist the pressure to sell and develop. ~~are facing increased pressure to develop their forestlands and possess limited financial resources to resist this pressure.~~ Recent US Forest Service data show the acres in forestland has recently declined for the first time in nearly a century.

(3) Private owners of forestlands are significant in this State as they own nearly 80 percent of the forestlands in Vermont.

(4) Forest carbon offset markets are emerging as a potential revenue source for forest landowners.

(5) The purpose of this section is to create a pilot project to allow the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation to demonstrate how parcels of Vermont's forestlands may enter both compliance and voluntary carbon

markets, and produce a report and materials to aid private owners of forestlands entering both compliance and voluntary carbon markets.

(b) The Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation shall establish the Green Mountain State Forest Carbon Pilot Project that shall:

(1) enter at least one parcel of forestland into a voluntary carbon market;

(2) enter at least one parcel of forestland into a compliance carbon market; and

(3) produce a report and any necessary materials that will aid in the education of private owners of Vermont forestlands on the process of entering their lands into a carbon market.

If there is sufficient activity in private markets that pilot projects would serve little additional benefit and the purposes of subsection (d) can be achieved without the added cost of developing pilot projects, then these projects can be deemed optional.

(c) The Department shall have the authority to use available private, State, and federal funding to implement the pilot project as described in subsection (b) of this section.

(d) On or before January 15, 2021, the Department shall submit a report to the Senate Committee on Agriculture and the House Committee on Agriculture and Forestry addressing:

(1) the implementation of the pilot project;