

1 Introduced by Committee on Commerce and Economic Development

2 Date:

3 Subject: Commerce and trade; economic development

4 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to provide

5 additional CARES Act relief to Vermont businesses that have suffered

6 economic harm due to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

7 An act relating to providing additional COVID-19 relief

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

9 Sec. 1. 2020 Acts and Resolves No. 137, Sec. 6 is amended to read:

10 Sec. 6. COVID-19; ECONOMIC SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES

11 AND INDIVIDUALS

12 (a) Appropriations; grants. The following amounts are appropriated from

13 the Coronavirus Relief Fund to the named recipients to provide grants to

14 businesses that have suffered economic harm due to the COVID-19 public

15 health emergency and economic crisis.

16 (1) ~~\$82,000,000.00 for additional emergency economic recovery grants~~

17 ~~pursuant to 2020 Acts and Resolves No. 115 (S.350), Secs. 2-3~~

18 \$155,000,000.00 for grants to businesses that meet the eligibility criteria in

19 subsection (c) of this section as follows:

1 (A) ~~\$56,000,000.00~~ \$124,000,000.00 to the Agency of Commerce  
2 and Community Development.

3 (B) \$26,000,000.00 to the Department of Taxes.

4 \* \* \*

5 (5) \$5,000,000.00 to the Agency of Commerce and Community  
6 Development to grant to the Vermont Arts Council for grants to nonprofit arts  
7 and cultural organizations. ~~For purposes of calculating reduction in revenue~~  
8 ~~under this subdivision, “revenue” does not include tax deductible charitable~~  
9 ~~contributions.~~

10 \* \* \*

11 (c) Eligibility; grant amount; terms; guidelines.

12 (1) To be eligible for a grant under subsection (a) or (b) of this section, a  
13 business must meet the following eligibility criteria and comply with the  
14 guidelines adopted pursuant to ~~2020 Acts and Resolves No. 115 (S.350) unless~~  
15 ~~otherwise provided in this section, except that a business must demonstrate that~~  
16 ~~it suffered a 50 percent or greater reduction in revenue due to the COVID 19~~  
17 ~~public health emergency and economic crisis in a monthly or quarterly period~~  
18 ~~from March 1, 2020 to September 1, 2020 as compared to the same period in~~  
19 ~~2019~~ subdivision (4) of this subsection:

20 (A) The business is a private, for-profit or nonprofit organization that  
21 is domiciled or has its primary place of business in Vermont.

1           (B) The business is either open at the time of application or is closed  
2           due to the COVID-19 public health emergency but has a good-faith plan for  
3           reopening.

4           (C) The business demonstrates need based on economic loss due to  
5           the COVID-19 public health emergency from March 1, 2020 to December 1,  
6           2020.

7           (2)(A)(i) The Agency shall establish standards and criteria for  
8           determining the amount of grant awards to prioritize applicants based on their  
9           financial needs and shall distribute all grants prior to December 20, 2020.

10           (ii) The Agency shall establish an application process with  
11           appropriate deadlines for accepting and approving applications and shall  
12           disburse funds after all applications have been processed based on  
13           demonstrated need and not based on a first-come, first-served basis.

14           (B)(i) Notwithstanding subdivision (2)(A) of this subsection, the  
15           Agency shall reserve not more than \$10,000,000.00 for "Critical Need Grants"  
16           that shall be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis for applicants who  
17           are imminently at risk of closing without grant assistance.

18           (ii) Critical Need Grants are available to applicants who  
19           demonstrate that they are at risk of closing without immediate grant support  
20           and cannot remain in business if required to wait for the disbursement of other  
21           grants after the application period has closed.

1                     (iii) Any funds reserved pursuant to this subdivision (2)(B) that  
2                     are not distributed by November 15, 2020 shall revert for distribution to other  
3                     applicants.

4                     (3) The Agency shall consider whether and by how much grant awards  
5                     should be adjusted based on whether an applicant has received financial  
6                     assistance from other sources.

7                     (4) The Agency shall adopt and publish guidelines governing the  
8                     implementation of this section and may coordinate with local, regional, and  
9                     State economic development partners to administer grants pursuant to this  
10                    section, including Vermont-based credit unions and banks to process  
11                    applications based upon the criteria established to determine the actual need of  
12                    an applicant.

13   \* \* \*

14                     (e) Prohibition on multiple sources of funding.

15                     (1) A business may not receive a grant of Coronavirus Relief Fund  
16                     monies from more than one source, ~~except that a business in the dairy sector~~  
17                     ~~may apply for a grant under subdivision (a)(2)(B) of this section, provided that~~  
18                     ~~the award is not for the same purpose covered under other assistance from the~~  
19                     Fund.

20   \* \* \*

1 (g) Emergency economic recovery grant funds; transfer. If any funds  
2 appropriated to Agency of Commerce and Community Development and the  
3 Department of Taxes in 2020 Acts and Resolves No. 115 (S.350) remain both  
4 unencumbered and unspent as of August 1, 2020, the Agency and Department  
5 shall combine and administer those funds with the amounts made available to  
6 them in this section, subject to the standards and criteria established in this  
7 section.

8 Sec. 2. RECREATION SAFETY GRANTS; APPROPRIATION

9 The amount of \$5,000,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief  
10 Fund to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development for grants to  
11 Vermont ski area businesses to make necessary physical improvements to their  
12 facilities in order to mitigate public health and safety risks to the public due to  
13 the COVID-19 public health emergency.

14 Sec. 3. BUY LOCAL CONSUMER STIMULUS; MARKETING

15 (a) The amount of \$60,000,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus  
16 Relief Fund to the Department of Tourism and Marketing for the Restart  
17 Vermont Marketing Program to encourage visitation, relocation, and consumer  
18 spending in Vermont to support businesses that have suffered economic harm  
19 due to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

20 (b) Eligible uses for the funds appropriated in this section include:

1           (1) \$50,000,000.00 for a statewide consumer stimulus program with  
2           direct incentives to maximize the consumer spending power of Vermonters, to  
3           support restaurants, retail stores, lodging establishments, tourism and cultural  
4           attractions, and other businesses suffering economic harm due to continued  
5           capacity and travel restrictions imposed in response to COVID-19.

6           (2) \$10,000,000.00 for marketing activities that promote:

7                   (A) travel to and within Vermont to increase consumer spending at  
8                   tourism, hospitality, retail, and related businesses;

9                   (B) purchase of locally made products to support Vermont producers;  
10                  and

11                   (C) Vermont as an ideal place to relocate in the wake of the COVID-  
12                  19 pandemic to bring new residents and businesses to the State to provide  
13                  additional economic activity in Vermont communities to support businesses  
14                  impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency.

15           Sec. 4. 2020 Acts and Resolves No. 137, Sec. 1(a) is amended to read:

16                   (a) The purpose of this act is to appropriate ~~\$213,200,000.00~~ monies from  
17                   the Coronavirus Relief Fund to cover necessary broadband connectivity,  
18                   information technology, housing, and economic relief expenses incurred due  
19                   to, or as a result of, the COVID-19 public health emergency.

20           Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE

21                  This act shall take effect on passage.