

Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office

One Baldwin Street • Montpelier, VT 05633-5701 • (802) 828-2295 • Fax: (802) 828-2483

FISCAL NOTE

Date: March 11, 2020

Prepared by: Daniel Dickerson

H.880 An act relating to Abenaki place names on State park signs – As Introduced

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2020/Docs/BILLS/H-0880/H-0880%20As%20Introduced.pdf>

Bill Summary

The bill would require the Commissioner of the Dept. of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) to consult with the Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs (Commission) before installing/replacing signs in State Parks as to whether there is an Abenaki name for a site within the park. If there is, then the Abenaki name would need to accompany the English name. All sites with Abenaki names would need to have updated signage by July 1, 2025. The Commission would be required to provide a list to FPR with all Abenaki names for places and landmarks by January 15, 2021.

Fiscal Summary

JFO received cost estimates for replacement of signage from FPR. For its cost estimate, FPR assumed that only park entrance signs would be replaced. The bill does not single out only park entrance signs. The total cost to replace all entrance signs would be \$150,000, and the total cost to replace all signs would be \$235,000. FPR is aware of 15 parks that are currently known to have corresponding Abenaki place names.¹ The cost to replace these entrance signs would be \$50,000, or approximately \$3,300 per sign. FPR is unaware at this time which of these 15 signs would need to be replaced prior to 2025, although they assume that the average lifespan for a sign is 10 years.

If all entrance signs were required to be replaced and the cost was distributed across the five state fiscal years leading up to July 1, 2025 then the yearly sign replacement cost would be \$30,000. FPR has noted that it is unlikely that all state parks have corresponding Abenaki names, which would lower the annual cost. However, since the bill appears to apply to all signage, this fiscal note will estimate the total expenditure to be \$150,000 (approx. 64% of the \$235,000 cost to replace all signs). Additionally, any sign replacements in FY21 stemming from passage of this bill would likely be limited to only signs that are budgeted to be replaced anyways, so any new cost would be the incremental increase of adding the Abenaki name.

FY21 cost: Less than \$5,000

FY22-25 cost: \$35,000 to \$40,000 per year (Total of \$150,000)

As the bill does not contain any new sources of revenue, FPR would likely have to reevaluate budget priorities in out-years to absorb the costs listed above, request additional General Fund dollars, or increase state park fees (which is done by rulemaking).

¹ There are currently 52 developed state parks in Vermont. <https://vtstateparks.com/assets/pdf/infographic-8.5.pdf>