



**STATE OF VERMONT**  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL  
RESOURCES, FISH, AND WILDLIFE

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April 5, 2019

To whom it may concern:

In 2017, the General Assembly enacted Act 47, an act relating to the Commission on Act 250: the Next 50 years. This Act established a commission to review the history and procedures of Act 250 and recommend changes to update the law. The House Committee on Natural Resources, Fish, and Wildlife received these recommendations from the Commission and is currently working on a bill containing these changes.

As you are aware, the Commission recommended a number of changes related to slate quarries in Vermont. Among the recommendations is the repeal of the Act 250 exemption for registered slate quarries. The Committee is considering this change. However, the Committee believes that the citizens impacted by this decision may be in the best position to guide the process.

The Committee requests that a stakeholder group meet and come to an agreement on conditions for slate quarry operations. The group of stakeholders shall include operators of Vermont slate quarries, owners of property adjacent to slate quarries, and representatives from the municipalities where the slate quarries are located. The stakeholder meetings shall be facilitated by the District 1 Environmental District Commission. The group shall develop a set of agreed upon permit conditions related to the operation of slate quarries, such as hours of operations, traffic limits, limits on blasting, and notice requirements. These conditions would serve to form a type of general permit for existing slate quarries. If a registered slate quarry agreed to operate under these conditions, application for the permit would be a minor application under the Act 250 process and would therefore be approved within 15 days, unless a hearing was requested. This process would lead to the permitting of slate quarries, while making it predictable for slate quarry operators.

The Committee asks the group to meet over the summer and fall months and report back the agreed upon conditions by November 30, 2019. In absence of an agreement, the Committee will move ahead with the change proposed by the Commission on Act 250 and repeal the exemption for registered slate quarries, requiring them to apply for and receive an Act 250 permit.

The Committee believes that the citizens of the slate region will be able to come together and discuss concerns and arrive at common ground. This industry remains important to the District 1 region and the State as a whole. The environmental concerns of adjacent landowners are shared by the Committee. Act 250 was enacted as a balance of economic and environmental considerations, administered by citizens of Vermont. The Committee believes this stakeholder process will be a natural extension of Act 250 and will lead to results appreciated by all.

Sincerely,

Rep. Amy Sheldon, Chair for the  
House Committee on Natural Resources, Fish, and Wildlife