

1 **House Committee on Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife Proposed CRF**
2 **Assistance Provisions**

3 Sec. 1. OUTDOOR RECREATION INDUSTRY; COVID-19 FINANCIAL
4 ASSISTANCE

5 (a) Appropriation. The sum of \$1,000,000.00 is appropriated from the
6 Coronavirus Relief Fund to the Department of Forests and Parks in fiscal year
7 2021 for award of grants to implement and administer the Outdoor Recreation
8 Business Assistance Program established under this section.

9 (b) Purpose. The purpose of this section is to provide financial assistance
10 to outdoor recreation businesses in the State to assist with compliance with or
11 implementation of COVID-19 public health precautions.

12 (c) Definitions. As used in this section:

13 (1) “Commissioner” means the Commissioner of Forests, Parks and
14 Recreation.

15 (2) “Outdoor recreation business” means any person conducting a
16 business or a service within the State that offers outdoor recreation as the
17 principle part of the business or service, including outdoor outfitters, fishing
18 guides, snowmobile tours, ski tours, and other eligible activities approved by
19 the Commissioner. An “outdoor recreation business” shall include for-profit
20 businesses, not-for-profit businesses, and charitable organizations organized
21 under 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3).

22 (3) “VOREC” means the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic
23 Collaborative.

1 (d) Program establishment.

2 (1) The Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation shall establish a
3 program under VOREC to provide grants to outdoor recreation businesses to
4 comply with or implement COVID-19 public health precautions, including one
5 or more of the following:

6 (A) the costs of cleaning or disinfection services or equipment;

7 (B) personal protection equipment for staff or customers or
8 participants;

9 (C) costs of symptom monitoring or diagnosis to ensure safe
10 participation by customers or participants;

11 (D) signage or information material to inform staff and customers or
12 participants of necessary public health precautions;

13 (E) temporary staff housing necessary to maintain necessary public
14 health precautions;

15 (F) maintenance or repair of trails where damage is caused by
16 increased usage during the declared COVID-19 public health emergency; and

17 (G) other improvements necessary to address public safety needs due
18 to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

19 (2) In order qualify for assistance under this section, an outdoor
20 recreation business shall:

21 (A) be currently operating or providing services; and

22 (B) accurately demonstrate to the Commissioner eligible costs or

1 expenses that the outdoor recreation business incurred or will incur on or after
2 March 1, 2020 and before December 20, 2020.

3 (e) Implementation.

4 (1) The Commissioner shall create an application form that outdoor
5 recreation businesses shall utilize when applying for an award. Applicants
6 shall certify that all information they provide is truthful and accurate to the best
7 of their knowledge, information, and belief.

8 (2) The Secretary shall, based on the amount of cost or expense
9 documented by the outdoor recreation business on the date the application is
10 received, provide up to the maximum award authorized under this section.
11 Applications shall be processed in the order received, but an application shall
12 not be ready for evaluation until the Commissioner determines that the
13 application is administratively complete and includes required proof of costs or
14 expenses incurred in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

15 (f) Payment; maximum. The maximum amount of an award that the
16 Commissioner shall award under this section shall be \$700,000.00.

17 (g) Application; processing.

18 (1) Once an outdoor recreation business submits a complete application
19 and demonstrates costs or expenses, the Commissioner shall promptly issue a
20 payment, provided that the appropriated funds have not been expended. The
21 last payment may be a partial payment consisting of the remaining available
22 funds.

1 (2) Each award under this section shall be a direct payment from the
2 State of Vermont to an eligible outdoor recreation business. Outdoor
3 recreation businesses shall not submit more than one application.

4 (h) Program limitation. An outdoor recreation business shall not receive
5 assistance under this section for a cost or expense that that the business
6 previously received reimbursement or assistance for from insurance, another
7 federal or State grant program, or another source.

8 Sec. 4. AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES; COVID-19 PUBLIC
9 HEALTH PRECAUTIONS ON STATE LANDS;
10 APPROPRIATIONS

11 In addition to any other funds appropriated to the Agency of Natural
12 Resources in fiscal 2021, the amount of \$\$4,000,000.00 is appropriated from
13 the Coronavirus Relief Fund for the purpose of implementing COVID-19
14 public health precautions on lands owned or controlled by the Agency of
15 Natural Resources. Eligible projects to implement COVID-19 public health
16 precautions include:

17 (1) updating of signage or information provided at entry to or access to
18 trails, access areas, forests, parks, or other areas where information regarding
19 COVID-19 public health precautions would be available to the users;

20 (2) temporary campsites or structures to allow for proper social
21 distancing of users and staff; and

22 (3) the cost or expense of services or equipment required to clean or

- 1 sanitize public spaces.
- 2 Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE
- 3 This act shall take effect on passage.