Vermont Artificial Intelligence Task Force
February 2019 Update Report

Introduction

Act 137 created the Artificial Intelligence Task Force to investigate the field of artificial intelligence in the State and make recommendations on the responsible growth of Vermont's emerging technology markets, the use of artificial intelligence in State government, and State regulation of the artificial intelligence field.

Membership of the task force is comprised of 14 members. They represent a diverse group of individuals across various industries, backgrounds, technological skill and age ranges. The members and their affiliations are:

> Brian Breslend; Vermont Society of Engineers (Co-chair)
> Rep. Brian Cina; National Association of Social Workers - Vermont
> Donna Rizzo; Department of Civil &
> Environmental Engineering at UVM
> Eugene Santos; Thayer School of Engineering at Dartmouth
> Honorable John A. Dooley; Justice Vermont Supreme Court (Retired)
> James Lyall; American Civil Liberties Union of Vermont
> Trey Dobson, MD; Vermont Medical Society
> Christopher Herrick; Department of Public Safety (Co-chair)
> Jill Charbonneau; Vermont State Labor Council
> John Cohn; Vermont Academy of Science and Engineering
> Joe Segale; Vermont Agency of Transportation
> Mark Combs; Agency of Digital Services
> Michael Schirling; Agency of Commerce and Community Development
> Milo Cress; Union High School District No. 32

The following is an update report submitted to the Vermont House of Representatives Committee on Energy and Technology and the Vermont Senate Committee on Government Operations pursuant to Acts of 2018, No. 137, §1(h).

This report summarizes the activities of the Task Force since its inception and its planned activities in the future and requests an authorization for more meetings and an extension of the time for submitting its final report.

Task Force Activities and Progress

The Artificial Intelligence Task Force has, so far, met five times. The first meeting was held on September 4th, 2018. The topics for the first meeting involved introductions, review of legislative charge and scope of work, discussion of possible work product goals and selection of chair.

At this meeting, one discussion topic involved the potential threats and opportunities associated with AI. The group concluded that the intention of the task force was to focus on the benefits and risks (fear and

hope) of AI and approach the topics from a neutral perspective. Another discussion topic was how to have public involvement and input in the meetings. Ideas for this included public access television, social media, public comment meetings and radio broadcasting.

A subcommittee was selected at this meeting to develop case studies for specific applications for business owners and the effects of AI. The subcommittee include John Dooley, Eugene Santos and Joe Segale. The case studies included privacy concerns, medical devices and autonomous vehicles.

Finally, at the conclusion of this meeting Brian Breslend and Christopher Herrick were selected as co-chairs of the task force.

The second meeting was held on October 12th, 2018. Agenda topics included:

- Presentation of Case Studies Subcommittee
- Ideas for public engagement tools
- Discussion and selection of speakers to hear from
- Work Product Development
- Work Product Schedule

The case studies were presented to the task force from each subcommittee member. These case studies were real world examples of realistic issues facing business owners. The presenters gave detailed lists of risks and opportunities that would affect a business owner's decision to invest in AI.

The task force then discussed further public engagement tools. Options to engage the public included:

- Regional meetings
- Comment periods at begin/end of meetings
- Meetings at the Statehouse
- Survey Tool
- Press Release
- Social Media

At the conclusion to this subject, a subcommittee was assigned to research public engagement tools and provide and implement recommendations to the task force. This subcommittee included Jill Charboneau, Brian Cina, Mike Schirling, Milo Cress and John.

The next topic of discussion involved how the task force was going to develop the report, the schedule of the work product and selection of speakers the task force would like to hear from. During this discussion the Task Force discussed opportunities/issues to consider which concluded:

- Entrepreneurial opportunities
- Privacy
- Public Safety
- Life quality
- Responsibility/liability
- Jobs
- Productivity
- Civil rights

- Public Awareness
- Transparency
- Ethics
- Environmental
- Capital Expenses

The Task Force then transitioned to identifying the following sectors in Vermont that would be affected by AI:

- Medical
- Transportation
- Technology
- Manufacturing/construction
- Agriculture
- Services
- Education
- Justice
- Health care
- Insurance
- Financial services

The Task Force concluded that they would like to hear from representatives in the sectors listed above. Similar sectors were organized into categories and were assigned to subcommittee chairs and members. These subcommittees were tasked with identifying people with experience and expertise in the various subjects that were willing to speak with the Task Force. The subcommittees and members included:

Agricultural and Natural Resources

- John Cohn (chair)
- Donna Rizzo
- Brian Cina

Technology, Manufacturing, Construction, Labor

- Joe Segale (chair)
- Jill Charboneau
- John Cohn
- Brian Breslend

Medical, Health Care, Insurance

- Eugene Santos (chair)
- Trey Dobson
- Brian Cina

Social, Education and Criminal Justice

- John Dooley (chair),

- James Lyall
- Brian Cina
- Milo Cress

(The chair and members of this subcommittee were identified at the December 14th Task Force meeting.)

The third meeting was held on November 29th, 2019. The agenda for the meeting included hearing from speakers from the Agricultural and Natural Resource industries. The speakers were Asim Zia of UVM (Nat. Resources), Steve Farrington of Transcend Engineering (Nat. Resources), Scott Magnan of Scott Magnan Services (Ag.), Chuck Ross of UVM (Ag.), and Paul Godin of the Lely Center (Ag.)

The fourth meeting was held on December 14th, 2018. Milo Cress and John Cohn provided the Taskforce an overview presentation on how Artificial Intelligence works and the terminology used to describe its elements. The Task Force heard from the Subcommittee on Transportation, Technology, Manufacturing, and Construction. The speakers were: Joe Segale of VTrans (Transportation), Stephen Lawe of RSG (Transportation), Guy Rouelle of D&K (Aviation), Igor Asavki of AveraSemi (Manufacturing), Tim Kenney of AI Certain (Technology), Joey Appleton of ECI (Construction) and Jill Charboneau (Labor).

The fifth meeting was held on January 18th, 2019. The task force heard from the subcommittee on Medical, Health Care and Insurance. The speakers included: Dr. Nikoletta Sidiropoulous of UVM Medical Center, Mr. Charles H. Wells of Southwestern Vermont Health Care, Dr. Abiy B. Ambaye of UVM Medical Center, and Dr. Chris Danforth of UVM.

Discussion

The Task Force has recognized that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a powerful and pervasive technology, the applications of which are growing very fast. It further recognized that before the Task Force can make any recommendations the members needed to educate themselves on the technology generally and the present and anticipated applications of AI in Vermont and nationally. Thus, most of the first five meetings have been devoted to this education. Each of the topics subcommittee has the assignment to investigate its topic and invite field experts to educate the task force during task force meetings. In general, witnesses have been asked the following questions:

- What is the current status of artificial intelligence in your field and in Vermont in general?
- How is artificial intelligence expected to be applied in your field in the future?
- What are the pros and cons of emerging technologies in your field?
- Is there anything you would like the task force and the State to know?

Next Steps

The Task Force has planned meetings for February 22nd, 2019 and March 22nd, 2019. At the February meeting the task force will hear from the Social, Education, and Criminal Justice sector. The March meeting, and future meetings will be geared towards involving the public and development of the final report of the task force.

As addenda, see the Task Force meeting minutes attached to this report. Onion River Community Access Media has recorded some of the last two task force meetings and has videos available at https://www.orcamedia.net/series/artificial-intelligence-task-force.

Because the Task Force is still in the education and fact-finding stage of this process, it has not yet had the opportunity to develop recommendations in response to the broad questions in § 1(a)(2) of Act 137 or the narrower questions in §1(d)(1), (2) & (3) of the Act or the requested recommendations in § 1 (h)(1) through (5). Nor has it had the opportunity to engage and hear from the publicly generally on what it should recommend. The gathering of public opinion and the creation of recommendations will constitute the main activities after the end of the education process during the March meeting.

Act 137, § (c)(3) provides that the Task Force must meet only 10 times and provide a final report and terminate operation by June 30, 2019. It is now apparent to the members of the Task Force that staying within the limit on the number of meetings and completing its work by June 30th of this year will leave virtually no time for public engagement and insufficient time for deliberation and development of meaningful recommendations. The scope of the Task Force's assignment, and the complexity of the issues, necessitate more time and meetings to create a meaningful final report.

Accordingly, the Task Force requests the following amendments to Act 137 be made: (a) that § 1 (c)(3) be amended to authorize the Task Force to meet up to 15 times and to provide that its existence be terminated on September 30, 2019; and (b) § 1(h) be amended to require a second interim report on June 30, 2019 and a final report on September 30, 2019.   Commerce Secretary Schirling has indicated that the Commerce Agency will continue to provide administrative support for the Taskforce if it continues to September 30th. The chair of the Task Force is prepared to attend meetings of the House Energy and Technology Committee to discuss this request.