

1 H.926

2 Senators Parent and Starr move that the Senate propose to the House that
3 the bill be amended by striking out Sec. 33, effective dates, and its reader
4 assistance heading in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

5 * * * Rural Economic Development and Working Lands Enterprise Zones* * *

6 Sec. 33. 10 V.S.A. § 6081(aa) is added to read:

7 (aa) No permit or permit amendment is required for development within
8 a rural economic development and working lands enterprise zone.

9 Sec. 34. 24 V.S.A. § 2793f is added to read:

10 § 2793f. RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND WORKING LANDS
11 ENTERPRISE ZONES

12 (a) Purpose. This section is intended to encourage the creation of
13 municipal districts to promote the working landscape and the value-added
14 enterprises that are necessary to sustain them. Working lands enterprises, by
15 necessity, tend to be located outside state designated centers. They are often
16 dependent on weather or local commodity procurement and are forced to
17 operate differently than other businesses. Rural economic development and
18 working lands enterprise zones promote the consolidation of value-added
19 enterprises close to the farm and forest resources they are dependent on. This
20 consolidation also will promote siting of businesses in areas that reduce
21 impacts on natural resources and adjoining property owners.

1 (b) Application for rural economic development and working lands
2 enterprise zone. The State Board shall approve a rural economic development
3 and working lands enterprise zone if the application demonstrates and includes
4 all of the following elements:

5 (1) The municipality has a duly adopted and approved plan and a
6 planning process that is confirmed in accordance with section 4350 of this title
7 and has adopted bylaws and regulations in accordance with sections 4414,
8 4418, and 4442 of this title.

9 (2) A preapplication meeting with Department staff was held to review
10 the program requirements and to preliminarily identify possible rural economic
11 development and working lands enterprise zones.

12 (3) The proposed rural economic development and working lands
13 enterprise zone is in an area where municipal planning and bylaws promote
14 farming, forestry, and rural industrial uses in the area.

15 (4) Development in the rural economic development and working lands
16 enterprise zone is limited to value-added industries that promote lands staying
17 agricultural or forestry purposes.

18 (5) The area avoids or that minimizes to the extent feasible the inclusion
19 of “important natural resources” as defined in subdivision 2791(14) of this
20 title. If an “important natural resource is included within a proposed rural
21 economic development and working lands enterprise zone, the applicant shall

1 identify the resource, explain why the resource was included, describe any
2 anticipated disturbance to such resource, and describe why the disturbance
3 cannot be avoided or minimized.

4 (6) Is served by planned or existing transportation infrastructure that
5 supports the expected traffic from the rural economic development and
6 working lands enterprise zone.

7 (7) The application includes a map or maps that, at a minimum, identify:

8 (A) “important natural resources” as defined in subdivision 2791(14)
9 of this title;

10 (B) existing slopes of 25 percent or steeper;

11 (C) public facilities, including public buildings, public spaces, sewer
12 or water services, roads, sidewalks, paths, transit, parking areas, parks, and
13 schools; and

14 (D) planned public facilities, roads, or private development that is
15 permitted but not built.

16 (c) Designation process. Within 45 days of receipt of a complete
17 application for designation of a rural economic development and working
18 lands enterprise zone, the State Board, after opportunity for public comment,
19 shall approve a rural economic development and working lands enterprise zone
20 if the Board determines that the applicant has met the requirements of this
21 section. When approving a rural economic development and working lands

1 enterprise zone, the State Board shall consult with the applicant about any
2 changes the Board considers making to the boundaries of the proposed area.
3 After consultation with the applicant, the Board may change the boundaries of
4 the proposed area. In no case shall the boundaries of a rural economic
5 development and working lands enterprise zone be greater than ten acres.

6 Sec. 35. 3 V.S.A. § 2825 is amended to read:

7 § 2825. DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY

8 * * *

9 (f) The Secretary shall prioritize permitting and other natural resource
10 reviews for development in a rural economic development and working lands
11 enterprise zone.

12 * * Effective Dates * * *

13 Sec. 36. EFFECTIVE DATES

14 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2020, except that Sec. 25, 10 V.S.A.
15 § 6086(a)(8), shall take effect on September 15, 2021.