

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Energy and Technology to which was referred House
3 Bill No. 518 entitled “An act relating to the creation of the Municipal Fuel
4 Switching Grant Program” respectfully reports that it has considered the same
5 and recommends that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting
6 clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

7 * * * Findings * * *

8 Sec. 1. FINDINGS; MUNICIPAL ENERGY RESILIENCE

9 The General Assembly finds that:

10 (1) Vermont’s municipalities own and operate more than 2,000
11 buildings and facilities, which are used to provide services to its citizens,
12 including libraries; storing town vehicles; providing space for civic
13 engagement; and connecting citizens to healthcare, education, and commercial
14 interests.

15 (2) Vermont’s Global Warming Solutions Act sets aggressive targets for
16 greenhouse gas emissions reductions, and the heating of buildings provide
17 significant opportunities for meeting these targets.

18 (3) The volatile cost of fossil fuel heating is often one of the largest line
19 items in a municipal budget, which impacts the residential and commercial
20 taxpayers in that municipality.

21 (4) A modest expansion to the State Energy Management Program,
22 established in 29 V.S.A. § 168, made in 2019 can assist municipalities with

1 responding to the greenhouse gas emissions targets set forth in the Global
2 Warming Solutions Act.

3 (5) Connecting technical resources at the local, regional, and State level
4 and expanding the State’s energy management program to include municipal
5 buildings will promote increased resilience and sustained connection to critical
6 services for all Vermonters.

7 Sec. 2. MUNICIPAL ENERGY RESILIENCE; DEPARTMENT OF
8 BUILDINGS AND GENERAL SERVICES; ASSESSMENTS

9 (a) Energy resilience assessments. On or before September 1, 2022, the
10 Department of Buildings and General Services shall issue a request for
11 proposal for a comprehensive energy resilience assessment of covered
12 municipal buildings and facilities.

13 (b) Request for proposal. The Commissioner of Buildings and General
14 Services shall contract with an independent third party to conduct the
15 assessment described in subsection (a) of this section. The assessment shall be
16 completed on or before January 15, 2024.

17 (c) Application. A covered municipality, in coordination with a regional
18 planning commission that shall assist a municipality in developing plans, shall
19 submit an application to the Department of Buildings and General Services to
20 receive an assessment of its buildings and facilities pursuant to the guidelines
21 established in subsection (e) of this section.

1 (d) Scope. For each covered municipality, the assessment described in
2 subsection (a) of this section shall include a scope of work, cost, and timeline
3 for completion for each building or facility. The assessment shall also include:

4 (1) recommendations for improvements that reduce the operating and
5 maintenance costs, enhance comfort, and reduce energy intensity in a
6 municipal building or facility, including:

7 (A) the improvement or replacement, or both, of heating, ventilation
8 and air conditioning systems;

9 (B) the use of a renewable energy source for heating systems,
10 provided that recommendations for the use of a heating systems that uses fossil
11 fuels is not eligible; and

12 (C) improvements to the buildings or facilities thermal envelope;

13 (2) an evaluation on the reasonableness of battery storage and EV
14 charging stations and recommended locations, as applicable;

15 (3) an evaluation of the potential for on-site renewable energy
16 generation options and recommendation on the one most feasible, as
17 applicable;

18 (4) an estimate of costs for each recommendation;

19 (5) an estimate of system and equipment life cycle costs and
20 consumption data; and

21 (6) the potential to phase the scope of work and suggest a prioritized
22 order of completion separate from the energy assessment scope.

1 (e) Administration. The Department of Buildings and General Services
2 shall establish guidelines for a covered municipality to receive an assessment
3 and shall require at a minimum that:

4 (1) the covered municipality has access to high-speed Internet as defined
5 in the State’s Telecommunication Plan set forth in 30 V.S.A. § 202c or a plan
6 is in place by 2024 to ensure access to high-speed Internet;

7 (2) the municipality commits for at least a five-year period to have or
8 create at least one space in a building that is being assessed that is available to
9 the public to enable work, education, and health monitoring or telehealth; and

10 (3) any building that is assessed is compliant with the American
11 Disabilities Act at the time the project is completed.

12 (f) Definition. As used in this section, “covered municipality” means a
13 city, town, fire district or incorporated village, and all other governmental
14 incorporated units.

15 Sec. 3. MUNICIPAL ENERGY RESILIENCE GRANT PROGRAM

16 (a) Program established. In fiscal year 2023, there is established the
17 Municipal Energy Resilience Grant Program to award grants to:

18 (1) make recommendations to municipalities on the use of renewable
19 and efficient heating systems; and

20 (2) make necessary improvements to reduce emissions by reducing
21 fossil fuel usage and increasing efficiency in municipally owned buildings.

1 (b) Definition. As used in this section, “covered municipality” means a
2 city, town, fire district or incorporated village, and all other governmental
3 incorporated units.

4 (c) Administration; implementation.

5 (1) Grant awards. The Department of Buildings and General Services,
6 in coordination with Efficiency Vermont, through the State Energy
7 Management Program, shall administer the Program, which shall award grants
8 for the following:

9 (A) not more than \$200,000.00 to each covered municipality for
10 approved projects for weatherization, thermal efficiency, to supplement or
11 replace fossil fuel heating systems with more efficient renewable energy
12 heating systems, and any other expenditures necessary for the project to be
13 eligible for funding under federal law and guidelines; and

14 (B) not more than \$4,000.00 to each covered municipality to
15 facilitate community meetings and communication about municipal energy
16 resilience.

17 (2) Grant program design. The Department of Buildings and General
18 Services, in consultation with Efficiency Vermont; the Vermont League of
19 Cities and Towns; regional planning commissions; and experts in the field of
20 thermal enclosure, energy efficiency, and renewable building space systems,
21 shall design the Program. The Program shall include a streamlined and
22 minimal application process for a municipality to apply directly to the

1 Department of Buildings and General Services or with the assistance of a
2 regional planning commission. The Program design shall establish:

3 (A) an outreach and education plan by regional planning
4 commissions, including specific tactics to reach and support each covered
5 municipality;

6 (B) an equitable system for distributing grants statewide on the basis
7 of need according to a system of priorities, including the following ranked in
8 priority order:

9 (i) a municipality with the highest energy burden community
10 needs and lowest resources, as defined in Efficiency Vermont’s 2019 Energy
11 Burden Report;

12 (ii) a municipality that may not have administrative support to
13 apply for grants;

14 (iii) geographic location;

15 (iv) community size; and

16 (v) whether another division of the municipality has already
17 received a grant;

18 (C) guidelines for renewable and energy efficiency buildings systems
19 resilience, durability, health, and efficiency measures and costs that will be
20 eligible for grant funding; and

1 (D) eligibility criteria for covered municipalities, including written
2 commitment by the municipality to conduct community workshops and a self-
3 assessment.

4 (d) Coordination. The Department of Buildings and General Services shall
5 coordinate with any other State entities and agencies working with covered
6 municipalities to provide grants for the Program.

7 (e) Funding. The Program shall be funded by the American Rescue Plan
8 Act Capital Projects Fund.

9 (f) Assessment. A covered municipality is only eligible for a grant under
10 this section if an assessment of its buildings and facilities has been conducted
11 pursuant to Sec. 2 of this act.

12 Sec. 4. MUNICIPAL ENERGY RESILIENCE GRANT PROGRAM;

13 APPROPRIATION

14 In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$48,400,000.00 shall be appropriated
15 from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) from the Capital Projects Fund to
16 the Municipal Energy Resilience Grant Program for use as follows:

17 (1) The amount of \$2,400,000.00 shall be appropriated to the Agency of
18 Commerce and Community Development for regional planning commissions
19 to assist with grant and assessment applications and provide programming and
20 technical assistance to covered municipalities.

21 (2) The amount of \$46,000,000.00 shall be appropriated to the
22 Department of Buildings and General Services to be used as follows:

1 (A) \$5,000,000.00 for hiring a contractor to conduct assessments
2 pursuant to Sec. 2 of this act;

3 (B) \$1,000,000.00 for grants to covered municipalities to facilitate
4 community meetings and communication about municipal energy resilience;
5 and

6 (C) \$40,000,000.00 for grants to covered municipalities for
7 weatherization, thermal efficiency, and to supplement or replace heating
8 systems with more efficient renewable energy heating systems.

9 * * * Municipal Energy Loan Program * * *

10 Sec. 5. 29 V.S.A. § 168a is added to read:

11 § 168a. MUNICIPAL ENERGY LOAN PROGRAM

12 (a) Authority. The Department of Buildings and General Service is
13 authorized to provide financing to municipalities through the Municipal
14 Energy Loan Program for equipment replacement, studies, weatherization,
15 construction of improvements affecting the use of energy resources, the
16 implementation of energy efficiency and conservation measures, and the use of
17 renewable resources.

18 (b) Loan eligibility and criteria. The Commissioner shall establish for the
19 Program described in subsection (a) of this section:

20 (1) criteria to determine eligibility for funding, including repayment
21 terms;

1 (2) a priority basis for the selection process that ensures equitable
2 allocation of funds to municipalities, considering at least financial need,
3 geographic distribution, and ability to repay; and

4 (3) loan conditions that ensure accountability by a municipality
5 receiving funds.

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

7 (1) “Energy efficiency improvement” has the same meaning as in
8 section 168 of this title.

9 (2) “Municipality” means a city, town, fire district or incorporated
10 village, and all other governmental incorporated units.

11 (3) “Renewables” has the same meaning as in 30 V.S.A. § 8002.

12 (4) “Resource conservation measures” has the same meaning as in
13 section 168 of this title.

14 Sec. 6. 29 V.S.A. § 168b is added to read:

15 § 168b. MUNICIPAL ENERGY REVOLVING FUND

16 (a) Creation. There is established the Municipal Energy Revolving Fund to
17 provide financing for the Municipal Energy Loan Program established in
18 section 168a of this title.

19 (b) Monies in the Fund. The Fund shall consist of:

20 (1) monies appropriated to the Fund or that are paid to it under
21 authorization of the Emergency Board;

22 (2) loan repayment by municipalities; and

1 (3) fees for administrative costs paid by municipalities, which may be
2 fixed by the Commissioner subject to the approval of the Secretary of
3 Administration.

4 (c) Repayment terms. A municipality receiving funding shall repay the
5 Fund through its regular operating budget according to a schedule established
6 by the Commissioner. Repayment may include charges of fees for
7 administrative costs over the term of the repayment.

8 (d) Fund administration.

9 (1) The Commissioner of Finance and Management may anticipate
10 receipts to this Fund and issue warrants based thereon.

11 (2) The Commissioner of Buildings and General Services shall maintain
12 accurate and complete records of all receipts by and expenditures from the
13 Fund.

14 (3) All balances remaining at the end of a fiscal year shall be carried
15 over to the following year.

16 (e) Definitions. As used in this section:

17 (1) “Energy efficiency improvement” has the same meaning as in
18 section 168 of this title.

19 (2) “Renewables” has the same meaning as in 30 V.S.A. § 8002.

20 (f) Annual report. Beginning on or before January 15, 2023 and annually
21 thereafter, the Commissioner of Buildings and General Services shall report to
22 the House Committees on Corrections and Institutions and on Energy and

1 Technology and the Senate Committee on Institutions on the expenditure of
2 funds from the Municipal Energy Revolving Fund. For each fiscal year, the
3 report shall include a summary of each project receiving funding and the
4 municipality’s expected savings. The provisions of 2 V.S.A. § 20(d)
5 (expiration of required reports) shall not apply to the report to be made under
6 this subsection.

7 Sec. 7. MUNICIPAL ENERGY REVOLVING FUND; FY 2023

8 APPROPRIATION; REPORT

9 (a) In FY 2023, to the extent permitted by federal law, the following
10 amounts shall be transferred to the Department of Buildings and General
11 Services from the Department of Public Service for the Municipal Energy
12 Revolving Fund, as established in 29 V.S.A. § 168b:

13 (1) not more than \$750,000.00 from the Energy Efficiency Revolving
14 Loan Fund Capitalization Grant allocated in the Infrastructure Investment and
15 Jobs Act, Pub. L. No. 117-58 pursuant to the process set forth in 32 V.S.A. § 5;
16 and

17 (2) not more than \$1,500,000.00 from the Energy Efficiency and
18 Renewable Energy Block Grant Fund in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs
19 Act, Pub. L. No. 117-58 pursuant to the process set forth in 32 V.S.A. § 5.

20 (b) On or before January 15, 2023, the Department of Public Service shall
21 report to the House Committee on Energy and Technology and the Senate
22 Committee on Finance on the total grant amounts approved by the State and

1 transferred to the Municipal Energy Revolving Fund pursuant to subsection (a)
2 of this section.

3 Sec. 8. 2015 Acts and Resolves No. 58, Sec. E.112, as amended by 2019 Acts
4 and Resolves No. 72, Sec. E.112, is further amended to read:

5 Sec. E.112 ENERGY EFFICIENCY; STATE BUILDINGS AND
6 FACILITIES

7 * * *

8 (b) Notwithstanding any provision of Title 30 of the Vermont Statutes
9 Annotated, Public Service Board order, or other provision of law to the
10 contrary:

11 (1) The Department and Efficiency Vermont (EVT) shall augment the
12 Program for a preliminary period of ~~eight~~ 11 years commencing in fiscal year
13 2016 under which EVT shall provide the Department with support for the
14 Program to deliver cost-effective energy efficiency and conservation measures
15 to State buildings and facilities, with the goal of this pilot to create a self-
16 sustaining program at the Department, with annual savings from energy
17 projects exceeding the annual cost to staff the Program. The Department and
18 EVT may agree to continue conducting this augmented Program in subsequent
19 fiscal years, after considering recommendations for improvement based on
20 evaluation of the preliminary period.

21 * * *

1 (d) On or before October 1 of each year commencing in 2016 and ending in
2 ~~2023~~ 2027, the Department and EVT shall provide a joint report on the
3 implementation of this section.

4 * * *

5 (5) The report to be submitted in 2019 ~~and~~, in 2023, and in 2027 shall
6 contain an evaluation of the Program authorized under this section and any
7 resulting recommendations, including recommendations related to Program
8 continuation beyond ~~2023~~ 2027.

9 * * *

10 Sec. 9. FY 2023; APPROPRIATION; DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS
11 AND GENERAL SERVICES; REGIONAL PLANNING
12 COMMISSIONS; POSITIONS

13 (a) Department of Buildings and General Services. Two full-time, limited-
14 service positions are created in the Department of Buildings and General
15 Services in fiscal years 2023 for three fiscal years as part of the expanded State
16 Energy Management Program, as set forth between Efficiency Vermont and
17 the Department of Public Service. The positions shall be responsible for
18 determining project eligibility; coordinating with regional planning
19 commissions to recruit and coordinate auditors, engineers, and contractors; and
20 providing financing technical assistance for municipalities implementing
21 projects. These positions shall be funded by Efficiency Vermont pursuant to
22 the authority set forth in 2015 Acts and Resolves No. 58, Sec. E.112, as

1 amended by 2019 Acts and Resolves No. 72, Sec. E.112. No additional budget
2 appropriation or State funds shall be used for these positions.

3 (b) Regional planning commissions. The amount of \$2,400,000.00 in
4 General Funds shall be appropriated to the Agency of Commerce and
5 Community Development’s Community Development Program to fund
6 staffing at each regional planning commission in fiscal years 2023 and 2024 to
7 solicit, coordinate, and develop projects for covered municipalities through the
8 Municipal Energy Resilience Grant Program. The funding to RPCs shall be
9 distributed as follows:

10 (1) Fifty-five percent of the funds shall be divided equally among the
11 regional planning commissions.

12 (2) Forty-five percent of the funds shall be allocated according to the
13 number of Vermont member municipalities in each regional planning
14 commission as of July 1, 2022.

15 * * * Effective Date * * *

16 Sec. 10. EFFECTIVE DATE

17 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2022.

18 and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: “An act
19 relating to municipal energy resilience initiatives”

20
21
22 (Committee vote: _____)

1

2

Representative _____

3

FOR THE COMMITTEE