

H.610 Bill Introduction

This bill seeks to allow State-owned airports that have filed a Master Plan to expand and develop their existing vacant land to further the economic viability of their communities, without having to pay hefty mitigation fees. The obvious choice for an aviation business wishing to locate in Vermont is the Burlington International Airport in South Burlington ; however, this resource is closed to further development because it is full. Many of our town industrial parks in larger municipalities are also full. Our smaller, State-owned airports, such as Highgate, Berlin, Coventry, are adjacent to agricultural land which was previously part of operating farms. The State purchased these lands with the intention of future development and expansion of aviation facilities. With the need to put more people back to work in higher-paying, professional positions and technical trades, the time for expansion is now. There are several aviation-related businesses waiting in the wings for open space to be able to locate and expand operation in Franklin County, as a result of space in Chittenden County being at capacity. The logical site is at the Franklin County State Airport in Highgate where the FAA is currently embarking on a multi-year, multi-million dollar expansion of the runway and hangar space, complete with important safety updates, including improved lighting and fencing. In development of this bill, Franklin County Senator Corey Parent worked with VTRANS, focusing on allowing these State-owned airports to utilize their property without lengthy permit processes and large mitigation fees for those previously farmed lands. Senator Parent has a companion bill (S.278) that is in Senate Natural Resources, and it is our hope that we can move this legislation forward to assist our small airports with important expansion and development opportunities that will serve to benefit our communities on the whole. We appreciate your support and thank you for the your time.