

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Commerce and Economic Development to which was  
3 referred House Bill No. 159 entitled “An act relating to creating the Better  
4 Places Program” respectfully reports that it has considered the same and  
5 recommends that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting  
6 clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

7 \*\*\* Tourism and marketing fund; seed investment;  
8 dedicated funding mechanism \*\*\*

9 Sec. 1. FINDINGS

10 (a) The General Assembly finds:

11 (1) The tourism and hospitality sector has suffered widespread  
12 disruption from the Covid-19 pandemic, with restaurant, lodging,  
13 entertainment, specialty retail and related businesses, as well as cultural  
14 attractions, suffering job losses and an uncertain ability to remain operational  
15 due to the travel restrictions imposed and the revenue losses that have been  
16 experienced.

17 (2) According to the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing  
18 2019 Benchmark Study, Vermont’s tourism industry brings in \$3.0 billion into  
19 the Vermont economy, and supports over 31,000 jobs.

20 (3) When travel is safe again, Vermont will have a strategic opportunity  
21 coming out of the pandemic to encourage visitation due our abundance of open

1 space, strong cultural and outdoor recreation assets and careful management of  
2 the virus.

3 (4) Vermont has the smallest tourism marketing budget in New England.  
4 In FY20, New Hampshire’s tourism budget was \$10.8M, Massachusetts’s was  
5 \$12.9M and Maine’s was \$17.9M, compared to \$3.0M for Vermont.

6 (5) Increased investment in destination marketing will allow the  
7 Department of Tourism and Marketing to market Vermont as a global tourism  
8 destination to attract more visitors, bring economic activity to rural  
9 communities, and sustain Vermont’s iconic brand.

10 Sec. 2. 10 V.S.A. chapter 27, subchapter 4 is added to read:

11 Subchapter 4. Tourism Marketing Promotion Fund

12 § 670. TOURISM MARKETING PROMOTION FUND

13 (a)(1) There is created a Tourism Marketing Promotion Fund, within the  
14 Department of Tourism and Marketing, which the Department shall manage  
15 pursuant to 32 V.S.A. chapter 7, subchapter 5.

16 (2) The purpose of the Fund is for the Department to promote Vermont’s  
17 travel, recreation, culinary, arts, culture, agritourism, and heritage experiences  
18 to attract visitors, and stimulate visitor spending with local attractions and  
19 small businesses in rural communities and throughout the state. By using the  
20 amounts within the Fund, the Department will enhance Vermont’s image as a

1 tourist destination, increase visitor spending, and boost the revenues that are  
2 generated through the meals and rooms tax.

3 (3) It is the intent that the amounts the Fund receives from the meals  
4 and rooms tax shall be in addition to the funding regularly appropriated to the  
5 Department for tourism and marketing.

6 (b) The Fund is composed of the following:

7 (1) 69% of excess revenue from the meals and rooms taxes collected as  
8 compared to the current year Consensus Revenue Forecast, and as imposed  
9 under 32 V.S.A. chapter 225; and

10 (2) any other amounts transferred or appropriated to it by the General  
11 Assembly.

12 (c) All interest earned on Fund balances shall be credited to the Fund. Any  
13 balance remaining at the end of the fiscal year shall remain in the Fund.

14 (d) Funds shall not be transferred in years when meals and rooms tax  
15 revenues are not above the current year Consensus Revenue Forecast.

16 Sec. 3. 32 V.S.A. § 435(b) is amended to read:

17 (b) The General Fund shall be composed of revenues from the following  
18 sources:

19 \* \* \*

1           (7) 69 percent of the meals and rooms taxes levied pursuant to chapter  
2           225 of this title, less the excess revenues collected above the current year  
3           Consensus Revenue Forecast.

4           Sec. 4. APRROPRIATION

5           (a) In fiscal year 2022, the amount of \$1,000,000 is appropriated from the  
6           General Fund to the Department of Tourism and Marketing.

7   \*\*\* Consumer Stimulus Program \*\*\*

8           Sec. 5. 10 V.S.A § 2 is added to read:

9           § 2. BUY LOCAL VERMONT CONSUMER STIMULUS PROGRAM

10           (a) The Department of Tourism and Marketing shall create a Buy Local  
11           Consumer Stimulus Program to re-establish and increase local consumer  
12           spending in Vermont to support small business and communities recover from  
13           the Covid-19 pandemic.

14           (b) The Buy Local Consumer Stimulus Program shall include consumer  
15           purchasing incentives that maximize the effect of local consumer spending and  
16           bring shoppers back to Vermont’s downtowns and village centers, including  
17           but not limited to, at restaurants, entertainment businesses, retail stores, and  
18           tourism attractions.

19           (1) The program design for the Buy Local Consumer Stimulus Program  
20           shall include:

1           (A) An enrollment period for businesses to sign up for the program.

2           Eligible businesses will include:

3                   (1) restaurants, retail stores, entertainment businesses and  
4           attractions; and,

5                   (2) be located in a designated downtown or village center,  
6           designated by the Downtown Development Board pursuant to 24 V.S.A.  
7           chapter 76a, subchapter 2793a

8           (B) An enrollment period for consumers to sign up for the program.

9           At the end of the enrollment period, consumers who receive incentives from  
10          the program will be determined by a random lottery.

11                   (1) The distribution of incentives to consumers will be based on  
12          percent of population, by county.

13                   (2) Consumers who receive an incentive will be able to choose  
14          where to redeem that incentive from one or more businesses in their county of  
15          residence, based on the number of businesses in that county participating in the  
16          program.

17                   (3) Consumers will be able to redeem the incentives through  
18          December 31, 2022.

19          Sec. 6. APPROPRIATION

20                   (a) In fiscal year 2022, the amount of \$1,000,000 is appropriated from the  
21          General Fund to the Department of Tourism and Marketing.



1           (5) The Vermont Department of Economic Development in partnership  
2           with the UVM Office of Engagement will help Vermont businesses looking to  
3           commercialize new technologies advanced through research and development.

4           (6) It will help existing tech and advanced manufacturing companies in  
5           Vermont remain relevant in the market by strengthening collaboration between  
6           industry and higher-ed.

7           (7) In the long-term it will help Vermonters in all 14 counties who want  
8           the opportunity to work at companies on the cutting edge of innovation.

9           (b) Matching Grants and Technical Support.

10           (1) The Department of Economic Development shall contract with a  
11           technical service provider to assist Vermont-based technology companies in  
12           applying for federal small business innovation research and small business  
13           technology transfer grants.

14           (2) Eligible Vermont companies who receive a federal SBIR/STTR  
15           Phase I or II grant will be eligible to apply for a matching grant from the  
16           Department of Economic Development.

17           (3) Grantees would be eligible for up to 50 percent of the federal award  
18           up to \$50,000.00.

19           (4) Build and market co-location and science service opportunities at  
20           UVM (i.e., mass spectrometry and scanning electron microscope services, etc.)  
21           in areas like materials science, aerospace and environmental sensor industries.

1           (c) Industry Research Partnership Program.

2                   (1) Eligible Vermont companies can apply for grants to purchase  
3           services from universities and research institutions to stimulate innovation.

4                   (2) Eligible uses include research and development assistance,  
5           technology assessments, product prototyping, lab validation, and overcoming  
6           product development hurdles.

7                   (3) Grantees must provide a dollar-for-dollar match to State funding.

8           (d) Furthering Economic Development.

9                   (1) Utilizing other services and capabilities of UVM's office of  
10           engagement to help match students with opportunities at VT employers, enable  
11           and encourage alumni relocation to Vermont, and utilize data science  
12           capabilities to inform decisions and policy.

13                   (2) The Department of Economic Development will work with the Office  
14           of Engagement to amplify opportunities to start, grow, or relocate business to  
15           the state of Vermont.

16                   (e) Outcomes; measures. The Secretary shall adopt measures to evaluate  
17           the effectiveness of the funding, including federal dollars leveraged, amount of  
18           private capital raised by participating companies, and the number of new jobs  
19           created.

20           Sec. 8. APPROPRIATION



1        In fiscal year 2022, the amount of \$1,000,000 is appropriated from the  
2        General Fund to the Department of Economic Development.

3                                \* \* \* Postsecondary CTE System \* \* \*

4        Sec. 9. 2019 Acts and Resolves No. 80, Sec. 6 is amended to read:

5                                Sec. 6. POSTSECONDARY CAREER AND TECHNICAL  
6                                EDUCATION SYSTEM

7                                (a) Findings; purpose.

8                                (1) Findings. The General Assembly finds:

9                                (A) Like many rural states, Vermont faces demographic realities that  
10                                have resulted in an historically low unemployment rate and created obstacles  
11                                for employers that seek to hire and retain enough fully trained employees.

12                                (B) Notwithstanding this high employer demand, due to rapidly  
13                                changing technology and evolving business needs, potential employees may  
14                                lack the particular skills and training necessary to qualify for available jobs.

15                                (C) In order to assist employers and employees in matching demand  
16                                to requisite skills, Vermont has a broad diversity of postsecondary workforce  
17                                education and training programs offered by multiple providers, including  
18                                programs administered or funded by State government, educational  
19                                institutions, and business-lead groups ~~such as the Vermont Talent Pipeline~~  
20                                ~~Management Project~~. The State should continue to work closely with these  
21                                providers to identify and meet the needs of employers and employees.

1 (b) Postsecondary CTE System.

2 (1) The Department of Labor, in collaboration with the Agency of  
3 Education, the Vermont State Colleges, and the Vermont Adult Technical  
4 Education Association, and any consultant the Department hires for that  
5 purpose, shall consider and report to the General Assembly on the design,  
6 implementation, and costs of an integrated postsecondary career and technical  
7 education system that achieves the results specified in subdivision (a)(2) of this  
8 section.

9 (2) In performing their work, the Department, stakeholders, and any  
10 consultant shall conduct a broad-based stakeholder engagement process to  
11 solicit input from interested parties, and State agencies and departments shall  
12 provide necessary information and assistance within their relative areas of  
13 expertise.

14 (c) Report. On or before January 15, ~~2020~~ 2022, the Department of Labor  
15 shall submit a report on its work and any recommendations for legislative  
16 action to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development and  
17 the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General  
18 Affairs.

19 (d) In performing its work to create an integrated postsecondary career and  
20 technical education system, the Department shall recognize issues faced by  
21 persons with historical barriers to employment or who are underrepresented in

1 the workforce, including persons who have faced discrimination based on race,  
2 sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, refugee status, and national origin;  
3 persons in recovery; persons with a history of incarceration; and persons with  
4 disabilities.

5 \* \* \* Group Insurance; Northern Borders Regional Commission \* \* \*

6 Sec. 10. 3 V.S.A. § 631 is amended to read:

7 § 631. GROUP INSURANCE FOR STATE EMPLOYEES; SALARY  
8 DEDUCTIONS FOR INSURANCE, SAVINGS PLANS, AND CREDIT  
9 UNIONS

10 (a)(1) The Secretary of Administration may contract on behalf of the State  
11 with any insurance company or nonprofit association doing business in this  
12 State to secure the benefits of franchise or group insurance. Beginning July 1,  
13 1978, the terms of coverage under the policy shall be determined under section  
14 904 of this title, but it may include:

15 (A) life, disability, health, and accident insurance and benefits for any  
16 class or classes of State employees; and

17 (B) hospital, surgical, and medical benefits for any class or classes of  
18 State employees or for those employees and any class or classes of their  
19 dependents.

20 (2)(A)(i) As used in this section, the term “employees” includes any  
21 class or classes of elected or appointed officials, State’s Attorneys, sheriffs,

1 employees of State’s Attorneys’ offices whose compensation is administered  
2 through the State of Vermont payroll system, except contractual and temporary  
3 employees, and deputy sheriffs paid by the State of Vermont pursuant to 24  
4 V.S.A. § 290(b). The term “employees” shall not include members of the  
5 General Assembly as such, any person rendering service on a retainer or fee  
6 basis, members of boards or commissions, or persons other than employees of  
7 the Vermont Historical Society, ~~the Vermont Film Corporation~~, the Vermont  
8 State Employees’ Credit Union, Vermont State Employees’ Association, ~~and~~  
9 the Vermont Council on the Arts, and the Northern Border Regional  
10 Commission, whose compensation for service is not paid from the State  
11 Treasury, or any elected or appointed official unless the official is actively  
12 engaged in and devoting substantially full-time to the conduct of the business  
13 of his or her public office.

14 (ii) For purposes of group hospital-surgical-medical expense  
15 insurance, the term “employees” shall include employees as defined in  
16 subdivision (i) of this subdivision (2)(A) and former employees as defined in  
17 this subdivision who are retired and are receiving a retirement allowance from  
18 the Vermont State Retirement System or the State Teachers’ Retirement  
19 System of Vermont and, for the purposes of group life insurance only, are  
20 retired on or after July 1, 1961, and have completed 20 creditable years of

1 service with the State before their retirement dates and are insured for group  
2 life insurance on their retirement dates.

3 (iii) For purposes of group hospital-surgical-medical expense  
4 insurance only, the term “employees” shall include employees as defined in  
5 subdivision (i) of this subdivision (2)(A) and employees who are receiving a  
6 retirement allowance based upon their employment with the Vermont State  
7 Employees’ Association, the Vermont State Employees’ Credit Union, the  
8 Vermont Council on the Arts, as long as they are covered as active employees  
9 on their retirement date, and:

10 (I) they have at least 20 years of service with that employer; or

11 (II) have attained 62 years of age, and have at least 15 years of  
12 service with that employer.

13 (B) The premiums for extending insurance coverage to employees  
14 shall be paid in full by the Vermont Historical Society, ~~the Vermont Film~~  
15 ~~Corporation~~, the Vermont State Employees’ Association, the Vermont State  
16 Employees’ Credit Union, the Vermont Council on the Arts, or their respective  
17 retirees. Nothing herein creates a legal obligation on the part of the State of  
18 Vermont to pay any portion of the premiums required to extend insurance  
19 coverage to this group of employees.

20 \* \* \*

21 \* \* \* Better Places Program \* \* \*

1       Sec. 11. FINDINGS; INTENT AND PURPOSE

2           (a) The General Assembly finds:

3               (1) The COVID-19 pandemic has devastated our economy through  
4               business closures and job losses, and physical distancing requirements have  
5               exacerbated social isolation and impacted Vermonters' quality of life and sense  
6               of community.

7               (2) Public spaces are essential for supporting economic activity and  
8               health and well-being throughout the pandemic and for building engaged,  
9               equitable, and resilient communities in the future.

10              (3) Vermont's downtowns and villages increasingly depend on inviting  
11              public spaces that are robustly programmed to restore our distinct sense of  
12              place, strengthen community pride and identity, and attract businesses, jobs,  
13              and talent.

14              (4) Placemaking projects intentionally leverage the power of the arts and  
15              cultural assets to strengthen the economic and social fabric of communities and  
16              allow for growth and transformation that builds upon local and regional  
17              character, culture, and quality of place.

18              (5) Research shows that community-driven placemaking projects  
19              increase economic and civic vitality, and create spaces where commerce  
20              thrives, social connections flourish, civic participation increases, and residents

1 are empowered to take ownership of their future to build healthier and  
2 equitable local economies.

3 (b) It is the intent of the General Assembly to:

4 (1) enhance the livability and unique sense of place in Vermont’s  
5 downtowns and villages by providing funding, training, and resources to  
6 support investments in public spaces and local placemaking projects that build  
7 prosperous, equitable, healthy, and resilient communities;

8 (2) promote healthy, safe, equitable, and vibrant downtowns, villages,  
9 and neighborhoods for people of all ages, abilities, backgrounds, and incomes  
10 by increasing public space and placemaking investments in local communities;

11 (3) strategically coordinate and simplify the funding process from  
12 multiple community development funders, streamline the grantmaking and  
13 distribution process, democratize community access to grant funds, and  
14 provide communities a nimble, flexible source to quickly fund and launch  
15 community-driven placemaking projects to make positive and enduring change  
16 locally; and

17 (4) help local leaders identify, develop, and implement placemaking  
18 projects by creating the Better Places Program to advance local recovery  
19 efforts, rebuild local economies, boost local capacity, and reconnect  
20 Vermonters to one another – critical elements that help communities recover  
21 quickly and build prosperous and resilient communities in the future.

1       Sec. 12. 24 V.S.A. § 2799 is added to read:

2       § 2799. BETTER PLACES PROGRAM; CROWD GRANTING

3           (a)(1) There is created a Better Places Program within the Department of  
4       Housing and Community Development, and a Better Places Fund, which the  
5       Department shall manage pursuant to 32 V.S.A. chapter 7, subchapter 5.

6           (2) The purpose of the Program is to utilize crowdfunding to spark  
7       community revitalization through collaborative grantmaking for projects that  
8       create, activate, or revitalize public spaces.

9           (3) The Department may administer the Program in coordination with  
10       and support from other State agencies and nonprofit and philanthropic partners.

11       (b) The Fund is composed of the following:

12           (1) State or federal funds appropriated by the General Assembly;

13           (2) gifts, grants, or other contributions to the Fund; and

14           (3) any interest earned by the Fund.

15       (c) As used in this section, “public space” means an area or place that is  
16       open and accessible to all people with no charge for admission, and includes  
17       village greens, squares, parks, community centers, town halls, libraries, and  
18       other publicly accessible buildings and connecting spaces such as sidewalks,  
19       streets, alleys, and trails.



1       (d)(1) The Department of Housing and Community Development shall  
2       establish an application process, eligibility criteria, and criteria for prioritizing  
3       assistance for awarding grants through the Program.

4               (2) The Department may award a grant to a municipality, nonprofit  
5       organization, or community group with a fiscal sponsor, for a project that is  
6       located in or serves a designated downtown, village center, new town center, or  
7       neighborhood development area that will create a new public space or  
8       revitalize or activate an existing public space.

9               (3) A municipality is eligible for one grant per calendar year of not less  
10       than \$5,000 nor more than \$50,000, provided that the Department may award  
11       lesser grants in its discretion if necessary due to demand and availability of  
12       funds.

13               (4) The Department shall develop matching grant eligibility  
14       requirements to ensure a broad base of community and financial support for  
15       the project, subject to the following:

16                       (A) A project shall include in-kind support, matching funds raised  
17       through a crowdfunding approach that includes multiple donors, or both.

18                       (B) An applicant may not donate to its own crowd-granting campaign  
19       and shall obtain donations from community members and partners.

20                       (C) A donor may not contribute more than \$10,000 or 35 percent of  
21       the campaign goal, whichever is less.

1           (D) The minimum match for a crowd-granting campaign is 25  
2           percent of the campaign goal and the maximum amount is 50 percent.

3           (e) The Department of Housing and Community Development, with the  
4           assistance of a fiscal agent, shall distribute funds under this section in a manner  
5           that provides funding for projects of various sizes in as many geographical  
6           areas of the State as possible.

7           (f) The Department of Housing and Community Development may use up  
8           to 15 percent of any appropriation to the Fund from the General Fund to assist  
9           with crowdfunding, administration, and technological needs of the Program.

10          (g) Beginning on January 15, 2022 and annually thereafter, the Department  
11          of Housing and Community Development shall submit to the Senate  
12          Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs and the  
13          House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development an annual report  
14          regarding the activities and progress of the Program. The report shall:

15               (1) summarize the Program activities in the preceding year and report on  
16               the number of awarded grants and the total grant funds allocated;

17               (2) report on partner resources and contributions to the Program; and

18               (3) report on any measurable economic activity, which may include  
19               number of jobs created, number of visitors, the approximate number of square  
20               feet to be activated or redeveloped, and the number of volunteers engaged in  
21               the project.

1                                   \* \* \* Downtown Tax Credit Program \* \* \*

2       Sec. 13. 32 V.S.A. § 5930aa is amended to read:

3       § 5930aa. DEFINITIONS

4           As used in this subchapter:

5           (1) “Qualified applicant” means an owner or lessee of a qualified  
6       building involving a qualified project, but does not include a State or federal  
7       agency or a political subdivision of either; or an instrumentality of the United  
8       States.

9           (2) “Qualified building” means a building built at least 30 years before  
10      the date of application, located within a designated downtown ~~or~~ village  
11      center, or neighborhood development area, which, upon completion of the  
12      project supported by the tax credit, will be an income-producing building not  
13      used solely as a single-family residence. Churches and other buildings owned  
14      by religious organization may be qualified buildings, but in no event shall tax  
15      credits be used for religious worship.

16          (3) “Qualified code improvement project” means a project:

17           (A) to install or improve platform lifts suitable for transporting  
18      personal mobility devices, limited use or limited application elevators,  
19      elevators, sprinkler systems, and capital improvements in a qualified building,  
20      and the installations or improvements are required to bring the building into  
21      compliance with the statutory requirements and rules regarding fire prevention,

1 life safety, and electrical, plumbing, and accessibility codes as determined by  
2 the Department of Public Safety;

3 (B) to abate lead paint conditions or other substances hazardous to  
4 human health or safety in a qualified building; or

5 (C) to redevelop a contaminated property in a designated downtown  
6 ~~or~~ village center, or neighborhood development area under a plan approved by  
7 the Secretary of Natural Resources pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 6615a.

8 (4) “Qualified expenditures” means construction-related expenses of the  
9 taxpayer directly related to the project for which the tax credit is sought but  
10 excluding any expenses related to a private residence.

11 (5) “Qualified façade improvement project” means the rehabilitation of  
12 the façade of a qualified building that contributes to the integrity of the  
13 designated downtown ~~or~~ designated village center, or neighborhood  
14 development area. Façade improvements to qualified buildings listed, or  
15 eligible for listing, in the State or National Register of Historic Places must be  
16 consistent with Secretary of the Interior Standards, as determined by the  
17 Vermont Division for Historic Preservation.

18 \* \* \*

19 Sec. 14. 32 V.S.A. § 5930ee is amended to read:

20 § 5930ee. LIMITATIONS

1       Beginning in fiscal year 2010 and thereafter, the State Board may award tax  
2 credits to all qualified applicants under this subchapter, provided that:

3           (1) the total amount of tax credits awarded annually, together with sales  
4 tax reallocated under section 9819 of this title, does not exceed ~~\$3,000,000.00~~  
5 \$4,750,000.00.

6   \* \* \*

7           (5) credit under any one subsection of 5930cc of this subchapter may  
8 not be allocated more often than once every two years with respect to the same  
9 building; ~~and~~

10           (6) credit awarded under section 5930cc of this subchapter that is  
11 rescinded or recaptured by the State Board shall be available for the State  
12 Board to award to applicants in any subsequent year, in addition to the total  
13 amount of tax credits authorized under this section;

14           (7) the total amount of tax credits awarded annually to qualified projects  
15 located with neighborhood development areas does not exceed \$750,000.00;  
16 and

17           (8) no credit shall be awarded to a qualified project located within a  
18 neighborhood development area after July 1, 2026.

19 Sec. 15. 24 V.S.A. § 2793a is amended to read:

20 § 2793a. DESIGNATION OF VILLAGE CENTERS BY STATE BOARD

21   \* \* \*

1 (c) A village center designated by the State Board pursuant to  
2 subsection (a) of this section is eligible for the following development  
3 incentives and benefits:

4 \* \* \*

5 ~~(4) The following State tax credits for projects located in a designated~~  
6 ~~village center:~~

7 ~~(A) A State historic rehabilitation tax credit of ten percent under 32~~  
8 ~~V.S.A. § 5930cc(a) that meets the requirements for the federal rehabilitation~~  
9 ~~tax credit.~~

10 ~~(B) A State façade improvement tax credit of 25 percent under 32~~  
11 ~~V.S.A. § 5930cc(b).~~

12 ~~(C) A State code improvement tax credit of 50 percent under 32~~  
13 ~~V.S.A. § 5930cc(e) The Downtown and Village Center Tax Credit Program~~  
14 ~~described in 32 V.S.A. § 5930aa et seq.~~

15 \* \* \*

16 Sec. 16. 24 V.S.A. § 2793e is amended to read:

17 § 2793e. NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING AREAS; DESIGNATION OF  
18 NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT AREAS

19 \* \* \*

20 (f) Neighborhood development area incentives for developers. Once a  
21 municipality has a designated neighborhood development area or has a

1 Vermont neighborhood designation pursuant to section 2793d of this title, any  
2 proposed development within that area shall be eligible for each of the benefits  
3 listed in this subsection. These benefits shall accrue upon approval by the  
4 district coordinator, who shall review the density requirements set forth in  
5 subdivision (c)(7) of this section to determine benefit eligibility and issue a  
6 jurisdictional opinion under 10 V.S.A. chapter 151 on whether the density  
7 requirements are met. These benefits are:

8 (1) ~~The~~ the application fee limit for wastewater applications stated in  
9 3 V.S.A. § 2822(j)(4)(D);

10 (2) ~~The~~ the application fee reduction for residential development stated  
11 in 10 V.S.A. § 6083a(d);

12 (3) ~~The~~ the exclusion from the land gains tax provided by 32 V.S.A.  
13 § 10002(p); and

14 (4) eligibility for the Downtown and Village Center Tax Credit Program  
15 described in 32 V.S.A. § 5930aa et seq.

16 \* \* \*

17 Sec. 17. 24 V.S.A. § 2794 is amended to read:

18 § 2794. INCENTIVES FOR PROGRAM DESIGNEES

19 (a) Upon designation by the Vermont Downtown Development Board  
20 under section 2793 of this title, a downtown development district and projects  
21 in a downtown development district shall be eligible for the following:

1 (1) Priority consideration by any agency of the State administering any  
2 State or federal assistance program providing funding or other aid to a  
3 municipal downtown area with consideration given to such factors as the costs  
4 and benefits provided and the immediacy of those benefits, provided the  
5 project is eligible for the assistance program.

6 (2) ~~The following State tax credits:~~

7 ~~(A) A State historic rehabilitation tax credit of 10 percent under 32~~  
8 ~~V.S.A. § 5930cc(a) that meets the requirements for the federal rehabilitation~~  
9 ~~tax credit.~~

10 ~~(B) A State façade improvement tax credit of 25 percent under 32~~  
11 ~~V.S.A. § 5930cc(b).~~

12 ~~(C) A State code improvement tax credit of 50 percent under 32~~  
13 ~~V.S.A. § 5930cc(e) The Downtown and Village Center Tax Credit Program~~  
14 ~~described in 32 V.S.A. § 5930aa et seq.~~

15 \* \* \*

16 **Sec. 18. REPORT**

17 On or before January 15, 2026, the Department of Housing and Community  
18 Development shall report to the House Committees on Commerce and  
19 Economic Development, on General, Housing, and Military Affairs, and on  
20 Ways and Means and the Senate Committees on Economic Development,  
21 Housing, and General Affairs and on Finance on the number and location of



1 new neighborhood development areas, the amount of tax credits allocated  
2 annually to neighborhood development areas under 32 V.S.A. § 5930aa et seq.,  
3 the location of the projects, the number of housing units produced, the cost per  
4 unit, any recommended changes to the programs, and whether to extend the  
5 sunset in 32 V.S.A. § 5930ee(8).

6 \*\*\* International Business Attraction and Investment Program\*\*\*

7 Sec. 19. FINDINGS

8 (a) The General Assembly finds:

9 (1) Business investment by Quebec-based businesses is expected to  
10 generate increased employment, increase the range of job opportunities for  
11 Vermonters, and increase the dynamism of our communities.

12 (2) Investments in Vermont by outside businesses will increase the rate  
13 of growth for Vermont's economy;

14 (3) Increased investments in recruiting international businesses can lead  
15 to better wages, more attractive job opportunities, and broaden Vermont's tax  
16 base.

17 (4) From the past work of the Department of Economic Development,  
18 we know that small and mid-sized businesses in Quebec have a natural  
19 inclination to explore Vermont as the site for expansion in the U.S. market.

20 (5) Adding a Business Attraction and Investment Program, and the  
21 capability of a Foreign Trade Representative (FTR) to provide local

1 recruitment support, will allow the State of Vermont and its commercial  
2 entities to tap resources of institutions, enterprises, and people to a greater  
3 degree.

4 (6) A partnership with an FTR will provide the State with lead  
5 generation services, expansion monitoring, in-market representation, market  
6 intelligence, and the ability to engage and nurture high-growth companies  
7 primed for expansion.

8 Sec. 20. APPROPRIATION

9 (a) In fiscal year 2022, the amount of \$300,000 is appropriated from the  
10 General Fund to the Department of Economic Development.

11 Sec. 21. WORKFORCE TRAINING

12 In fiscal year 2022, the amount of \$2,300,000.00 is appropriated from the  
13 General Fund to the Vermont State Colleges, in coordination with the  
14 Department of Labor, for workforce training to serve Vermonters who have  
15 been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic through layoffs, furloughs, reduced  
16 hours, or due to being employed in an industry that has been severely affected,  
17 to:

18 (1) offer courses and workshops to upskill affected Vermonters in their  
19 current industry or reskill Vermonters who desire a change in their career path  
20 for more economic stability; and

1           (2) provide for necessary school supplies, wrap-around services,  
2           marketing of the program, and support staff.

3           Sec. 22. MICROBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

4           (a) The General Assembly finds that the Microbusiness Development  
5           Program has demonstrated the capability to help individuals lift themselves out  
6           of poverty by providing the technical support and financial assistance  
7           necessary to start and sustain entrepreneurial enterprises.

8           (b) In fiscal year 2022, the amount of X is appropriated from the General  
9           Fund to the Microbusiness Development Program to provide grants to eligible  
10           applicants for new business start-ups.

11          Sec. 23. EFFECTIVE DATE

12          This act shall take effect on passage.

13

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17          (Committee vote: \_\_\_\_\_)

18

\_\_\_\_\_

19

Representative \_\_\_\_\_

20

FOR THE COMMITTEE