

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Ways and Means to which was referred House Bill No.
3 697 entitled “An act relating to eligibility of reserve forestland for enrollment
4 in the use Value Appraisal Program” respectfully reports that it has considered
5 the same and recommends that the bill be amended as follows:

6 First: In Sec. 2, 32 V.S.A. chapter 124, subchapter 1, in section 3750, after
7 “working landscape” and before the period by striking out “and the rural
8 character of Vermont” and inserting in lieu thereof “, preserve the rural
9 character of Vermont, and protect the natural ecological systems and natural
10 resources of the forestland of Vermont”

11 Second: By striking out Sec. 3, Department of Forests, Parks and
12 Recreation; Management Standards for Reserve Forestland; Implementation, in
13 its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof two new sections to read as follows:

14 Sec. 3. DEPARTMENT OF FORESTS, PARKS AND RECREATION;
15 REPORT ON ENROLLMENT OF RESERVE FORESTLAND
16 IN USE VALUE APPRAISAL

17 (a) On or before December 31, 2022, the Commissioner of Forests, Parks
18 and Recreation, after consultation with the Division of Property Valuation and
19 Review and the Current Use Advisory Board, shall submit to the House
20 Committees on Natural Resources, Fish, and Wildlife, on Agriculture and
21 Forestry, and on Ways and Means and the Senate Committees on Natural

1 Resources and Energy, on Agriculture, and on Finance a report regarding the
2 enrollment of reserve forestland in the Use Value Appraisal Program. The
3 report shall include the following:

4 (1) The standards for the management of reserve forestland eligible for
5 participation in the Use Value Appraisal Program under 32 V.S.A.
6 § 3752(9)(A)(ii). The standards established by the Commissioner of Forests,
7 Parks and Recreation shall be the same or substantially similar to the standards
8 set forth in the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation report on
9 Considerations for a Reserve Forestland Subcategory in Vermont’s Use Value
10 Appraisal Program, dated October 15, 2021.

11 (2) A summary of how a property owner of land already enrolled in the
12 Use Value Appraisal Program as productive forestland would enroll land as
13 reserve forestland and how a property owner of land enrolled in the Use Value
14 Appraisal Program as reserve forestland would transition to enrollment as
15 productive forestland.

16 (b) On or before December 31, 2024, the Commissioner of Taxes, after
17 consultation with the Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation, the
18 Secretary of Agriculture, Food, And Markets, and the Current Use Advisory
19 Board, shall submit to the House Committees on Natural Resources, Fish, and
20 Wildlife, on Agriculture and Forestry, and on Ways and Means and the Senate
21 Committees on Natural Resources and Energy, on Agriculture, and on Finance

1 a report that examines the strategies and rates for the valuation of all land
2 enrolled in the Use Value Appraisal Program and that recommends whether
3 and how to ensure that the fiscal return to landowners and the State is
4 consistent among use values and uses of the different categories of enrolled
5 land.

6 Sec. 3a. IMPLEMENTATION

7 Beginning on July 1, 2023 and pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 3755, managed
8 forestland shall be eligible for enrollment in the Use Value Appraisal Program
9 as reserve forestland in accordance with the minimum acceptable standards
10 and administrative requirements established by the Commissioner of Forests,
11 Parks and Recreation.

12 Third: By striking out Sec. 5, effective dates, in its entirety and inserting in
13 lieu thereof a new Sec. 5 to read as follows:

14 Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATES

15 (a) This section and Secs. 1 (findings), 3 (report on enrollment for reserve
16 forestland), 3a (implementation), and 4 (report on enrollment) shall take effect
17 on passage.

18 (b) Sec. 2 (Use Value Appraisal Program) shall take effect on July 1, 2023.

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4 (Committee vote: _____)

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Representative _____

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FOR THE COMMITTEE