

TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

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

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

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

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

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

enrollment of reserve forestland in the Use Value Appraisal Program. The report shall include the following:

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

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

(b) On or before December 31, 2024, the Commissioner of Taxes, after consultation with the Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation, the Secretary of Agriculture, Food, And Markets, and the Current Use Advisory Board, shall submit to the House Committees on Natural Resources, Fish, and Wildlife, on Agriculture and Forestry, and on Ways and Means and the Senate Committees on Natural Resources and Energy, on Agriculture, and on Finance a report that examines the strategies and rates for the valuation of all land enrolled in the Use Value Appraisal Program and that recommends whether

and how to ensure that the fiscal return to landowners and the State is consistent among use values and uses of the different categories of enrolled land.

Sec. 3a. IMPLEMENTATION

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

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

Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATES

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

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_

Representative \_\_\_\_\_

FOR THE COMMITTEE