

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

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

7 First: In Sec. 2, 32 V.S.A. chapter 124, in section 3752, by striking out
8 subdivision (17) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subdivision
9 (17) to read as follows:

10 (17) “Reserve forestland” means land that is managed for the purpose of
11 attaining old forest values and functions in accordance with minimum
12 acceptable standards for forest management and as approved by the
13 Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation. On parcels of up to 100 acres,
14 50 percent or more of the enrolled parcel acres shall be composed of
15 significant and sensitive conditions in accordance with the minimum
16 acceptable standards established by the Commissioner. On parcels of 100
17 acres or more, 30 percent of the enrolled parcel acres shall be composed of
18 significant and sensitive conditions in accordance with the minimum
19 acceptable standards established by the Commissioner.

1 Second: By striking out Secs. 4, report on enrollment of reserve forestland,
2 and 5, effective dates, in their entireties and inserting in lieu therefore three
3 new sections to be Secs. 4–6 to read as follows:

4 Sec. 4. REPORT ON ENROLLMENT OF RESERVE FORESTLAND

5 On or before January 15, 2026, the Commissioner of Forests, Parks and
6 Recreation, after consultation with the Director of Property Valuation and
7 Review, shall report to the House Committees on Natural Resources, Fish, and
8 Wildlife and on Ways and Means and the Senate Committees on Natural
9 Resources and Energy and on Finance regarding enrollment of managed
10 forestland under the Use Value Appraisal Program. The report shall include:

11 (1) a summary of how enrollment of managed forestland in the Use
12 Value Appraisal Program has changed since passage of this act, including
13 whether owners of managed forestland changed the status of enrollment of
14 their land to reserve forestland or ecologically significant treatment areas;

15 (2) the number of persons enrolling land in the Use Value Appraisal
16 Program as reserve forestland;

17 (3) any other information that the Commissioner determines is relevant
18 to the ongoing enrollment of reserve forestland in the Use Value Appraisal
19 Program, including any relevant information regarding any impacts to the
20 overall managed forestland category;

1 (4) recommendations on how to promote the long-term enrollment of
2 land in the reserve forestland category of enrolled land in order to attain old
3 forest conditions or functions and values; and

4 (5) a recommendation on how to protect or conserve the functions and
5 values of significant and sensitive acres enrolled as reserve forestland when the
6 owner of the land wishes to amend the category or subcategory of enrollment.

7 Sec. 5. ANNUAL REPORT; DIVISION OF PROPERTY VALUATION
8 AND REVIEW

9 As part of the annual report required under 32 V.S.A. § 3412, the Director
10 of the Division of Property Valuation and Review shall include an assessment
11 of how enrollment of managed forestland in the Use Value Appraisal Program
12 has changed since reserve forestland was approved as eligible managed
13 forestland, including whether owners of managed forestland changed the status
14 of enrollment of their land to reserve forestland or ecologically significant
15 treatment areas.

16 Sec. 6. EFFECTIVE DATES

17 (a) This section and Secs. 1 (findings), 3 (report on enrollment of reserve
18 forestland), 3a (implementation), 4 (report on enrollment), and 5 (Division of
19 Property Valuation and Review report) shall take effect on passage.

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

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(Committee vote: _____)

Senator _____

FOR THE COMMITTEE