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H.723

Introduced by Representatives Williams of Barre City, McCann of Montpelier,  
Casey of Montpelier, Anthony of Barre City, Boyden of  
Cambridge, Branagan of Georgia, Brown of Richmond,  
Brumsted of Shelburne, Burrows of West Windsor, Campbell of  
St. Johnsbury, Chapin of East Montpelier, Chase of Chester,  
Chesnut-Tangerman of Middletown Springs, Cina of  
Burlington, Cole of Hartford, Farlice-Rubio of Barnet, Goldman  
of Rockingham, Headrick of Burlington, Howard of Rutland  
City, Hyman of South Burlington, Krasnow of South  
Burlington, LaBounty of Lyndon, LaLonde of South  
Burlington, Logan of Burlington, Ode of Burlington, Patt of  
Worcester, Priestley of Bradford, Rice of Dorset, Stebbins of  
Burlington, Surprenant of Barnard, Torre of Moretown, Troiano  
of Stannard, Waters Evans of Charlotte, and Wood of  
Waterbury

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Flood recovery; appropriations; land use planning

1 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to enact multiple  
2 provisions related to statewide flood recovery and improved future flood  
3 preparedness and resilience.

4 An act relating to flood recovery

5 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

6 \* \* \* Tax Abatement Reimbursement \* \* \*

7 Sec. 1. REIMBURSEMENT TO MUNICIPALITIES OF STATE

8 EDUCATION PROPERTY TAXES THAT WERE ABATED DUE  
9 TO FLOODING

10 (a)(1) The Commissioner of Taxes may approve an application by a  
11 municipality for reimbursement of State education property tax payments owed  
12 under 32 V.S.A. § 5402(c) and 16 V.S.A. § 426. To be eligible for  
13 reimbursement under this section, prior to April 15, 2024, a municipality shall  
14 have abated, in proportion to the abated municipal tax, under 24 V.S.A. § 1535  
15 the State education property taxes that were assessed on eligible property, after  
16 application of any property tax credit allowed under 32 V.S.A. chapter 154.

17 (2) As used in this subsection, “eligible property” means property lost or  
18 destroyed due directly or indirectly to severe storms and flooding in an area  
19 that was declared a federal disaster between July 1, 2023 and October 15,  
20 2023, provided the loss or destruction resulted in one or more of the following:

1           (A) a 50 percent or greater loss in value to the primary structure on  
2           the property;

3           (B) loss of use by the property owner of the primary structure on the  
4           property for 60 days or more;

5           (C) loss of access by the property owner to utilities for the primary  
6           structure on the property for 60 days or more; or

7           (D) condemnation of the primary structure on the property under  
8           federal, State, or municipal law, as applicable.

9           (b) If a municipality demonstrates that, due to disruption to tax collections  
10           resulting from flooding in an area that was declared a federal disaster between  
11           July 1, 2023 and October 15, 2023, the municipality incurred unanticipated  
12           interest expenses on funds borrowed to make State education property tax  
13           payments owed under 32 V.S.A. § 5402(c) and 16 V.S.A. § 426, the  
14           municipality may be reimbursed by an amount equal to its reasonable interest  
15           expenses under this subsection, provided the amount of reimbursed interest  
16           expenses shall not exceed eight percent.

17           (c) The Commissioner shall adopt application and approval procedures for  
18           reimbursements made to municipalities under this section.

19           (d) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the Agency of  
20           Education has the authority to make the reimbursements approved by the  
21           Commissioner under this section by:

1           (1) reducing the amount of State education property tax payments that a  
2           municipality owes under 32 V.S.A. § 5402(c) and 16 V.S.A. § 426; or

3           (2) reconciling the reimbursements with any State education property  
4           tax payments that a municipality has already made under 32 V.S.A. § 5402(c)  
5           and 16 V.S.A. § 426.

6           (e) A board of abatement may reconsider any decision it has made between  
7           April 1, 2023 and July 1, 2024. The General Assembly recognizes the public  
8           service provided by boards of abatement and encourages boards to create  
9           procedures to treat all claims for property tax abatements due to the severe  
10           storms and flooding uniformly.

11       Sec. 2. HOMESTEAD PROPERTY TAX CREDIT; HOUSEHOLD INCOME  
12               DEFINITION; EXCLUSION OF DISASTER RELIEF PAYMENTS;  
13               TAXABLE YEARS 2023 AND 2024

14           Notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. § 6061(4)(A) and (5), the definition of  
15           household income for purposes of the homestead property tax credit shall  
16           exclude all disaster relief payments, as determined under 26 U.S.C. § 139,  
17           received by a taxpayer in taxable years 2023 and 2024.

18                       \* \* \* Flood Recovery; Municipal Lost Revenue \* \* \*

19       Sec. 3. FLOOD RECOVERY LOST REVENUE GRANT PROGRAM

20           (a) The Agency of Commerce and Community Development shall establish  
21           a program to award grants to municipalities to offset municipal tax and other

1 revenues lost due to the 2023 flooding, including lost property tax revenue due  
2 to tax abatement of flood affected property. The Agency of Commerce and  
3 Community Development shall establish a formula for the award of grants to  
4 municipalities under this section. The formula shall be noncompetitive and  
5 shall be designed to award grants based on the proportion of revenue lost by  
6 each municipality.

7 (b) Applications for a grant under this section shall be submitted to the  
8 Agency of Commerce and Community Development on or before January 1,  
9 2025. The Agency shall provide an application form or electronic application  
10 that all affected municipalities may access.

11 (c) In addition to other funds appropriated to the Agency of Commerce and  
12 Community Development in fiscal year 2025, \$15,000,000.00 from the  
13 General Fund is appropriated to the Agency for grant awards to municipalities  
14 under this section.

15 \* \* \* Flood Recovery Assistance Program \* \* \*

16 Sec. 4. FLOOD RECOVERY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

17 (a) The Agency of Commerce and Community Development shall establish  
18 the Flood Recovery Assistance Program (FRAP) to provide financial  
19 assistance to nonprofit and for-profit businesses in the State that suffered losses  
20 due to the 2023 floods. Assistance under the program shall be available for all  
21 of the following when related to losses due to the 2023 flooding:

1           (1) physical or structural damages from flooding;

2           (2) lost revenue of businesses;

3           (3) lost wages of employees of businesses;

4           (4) lost inventory and new supplies;

5           (5) damaged equipment; and

6           (6) other administrative or operating expenses.

7           (b) The Agency shall develop criteria for awards under this section,  
8           including priority eligibility for businesses owned by persons of color and  
9           indigenous peoples and businesses owned by new Americans. U.S. citizenship  
10           shall not be a requirement for eligibility under the program.

11           (c) In addition to other funds appropriated to the Agency of Commerce and  
12           Community Development in fiscal year 2025, \$40,000,000.00 from the  
13           General Fund is appropriated to the Agency for grant awards under this  
14           section.

15           (d) The program established under this section shall replace the Business  
16           Emergency Gap Assistance Program created by the Agency.

17           \* \* \* VEM Coordination and Collaboration with Municipalities \* \* \*

18           Sec. 5. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS; MUNICIPAL COORDINATION  
19           AND COLLABORATION

20           (a) The Division of Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) at the  
21           Department of Public Safety shall establish a working group to improve VEM

1 coordination and collaboration with municipalities prior to and during declared  
2 emergencies and other hazards in the State. The working group shall be  
3 composed of:

4 (1) the Commissioner of Public Safety or designee;

5 (2) the Secretary of Commerce and Community Development or  
6 designee;

7 (3) the Secretary of Natural Resources or designee; and

8 (4) five representatives of municipalities affected by an emergency or  
9 other hazard in the State within the past 24 months to be appointed by the  
10 Vermont League of Cities and Towns.

11 (b) The Working Group shall address how to improve VEM coordination  
12 and collaboration with municipalities, including:

13 (1) increased municipal representation in VEM emergency planning;

14 (2) increased funding to municipalities to improve equipment necessary  
15 to properly respond to or mitigate an emergency or other hazard;

16 (3) protocols for communication between municipalities and VEM and  
17 other State agencies during an emergency or other disaster; and

18 (4) increased training and support by VEM of municipal emergency  
19 responders.

1       (c) The Working Group shall submit its recommendations to the  
2       Commissioner of Public Safety and the General Assembly on or before  
3       January 1, 2025.

4       Sec. 6. FLOOD RESILIENT COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

5       (a) Upon expenditure of all money appropriated to the Division of Vermont  
6       Emergency Management's (VEM's) Flood Resilient Communities Fund, VEM  
7       shall rename the program the Flood Resilient Communities Program to  
8       continue to provide funding for hazard mitigation matching funds and a State-  
9       level buyout program for parcels ineligible for Federal Emergency  
10       Management Administration-related programs. Funds under the Program shall  
11       be available for:

- 12               (1) the buyout or purchase of flood damaged property;  
13               (2) elevation of flood damaged structures;  
14               (3) removal of damaged structures or debris on flood damaged property;  
15       and  
16               (4) activities to increase flood resiliency of property, including  
17       streambank alteration or land conservation.

18       (b) In addition to other funds appropriated to the Department of Public  
19       Safety in fiscal year 2025, \$10,000,000.00 from the General Fund is  
20       appropriated to the Department for VEM administration of the Flood Resilient



1 Communities Program. VEM shall not commingle State funds received under  
2 this subsection with previous appropriations to VEM from federal sources.

3 \* \* \* Flood Recovery Group Funding \* \* \*

4 Sec. 7. VEM FUNDING OF FLOOD RECOVERY GROUPS

5 In addition to other funds appropriated to the Department of Public Safety  
6 in fiscal year 2025, \$2,000,000.00 from the General Fund is appropriated to the  
7 Department to provide grants to Long-Term Recovery Groups established to  
8 provide assistance and funding to municipalities impacted by the 2023  
9 flooding. An organization shall be eligible for an award under this section if  
10 the Federal Emergency Management Administration approved the organization  
11 as a long-term recovery group for the purpose of addressing the needs of  
12 persons or families affected by the 2023 flooding. Awards under this program  
13 shall be used to provide assistance for flood recovery when funds are not  
14 available from other federal or State resources.

15 \* \* \* Housing Development; Repair \* \* \*

16 Sec. 8. HOUSING DEVELOPMENT; FLOOD IMPACTED

17 MUNICIPALITIES

18 (a) In addition to other funds appropriated to the Agency of Commerce and  
19 Community Development in fiscal year 2025, \$2,000,000.00 from the General  
20 Fund is appropriated to the Agency for the purposes of the Vermont Housing  
21 Improvement Program (VHIP) to provide grants for housing construction,

1 renovation, or repair in municipalities impacted by the 2023 flooding or in  
2 municipalities adjacent to municipalities impacted by the 2023 flooding.

3 (b) The Agency shall develop criteria for awards under this section. The  
4 criteria shall prioritize awards to:

5 (1) persons and families of low or moderate income; and

6 (2) housing or other structures located in a flood hazard area.

7 (c) The Agency shall coordinate the award of grants under this section  
8 with funds awarded under Sec. 7 of this Act to ensure that all costs related to  
9 flood recovery and repair are eligible for assistance.

10 \* \* \* Disclosure of Property Located in Flood Hazard Area \* \* \*

11 Sec. 9. 27 V.S.A. § 380 is added to read:

12 § 380. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION; CONVEYANCE OF REAL  
13 ESTATE

14 (a) Prior to or as part of a contract for the conveyance of real property, the  
15 seller shall provide the buyer with the following information:

16 (1) whether the real property is located in a Federal Emergency  
17 Management Agency mapped flood hazard area or whether the property is  
18 located in a fluvial erosion hazard area mapped by a municipality;

19 (2) whether the real property was ever subject to flooding; and

20 (3) the flood insurance rates for the real property, if applicable.

1       (b) The failure of the seller to provide the buyer with the information  
2       required under subsection (a) of this section is grounds for the buyer to  
3       terminate the contract prior to transfer of title or occupancy, whichever occurs  
4       earlier.

5       (c) A buyer of real estate who fails to receive the information required to be  
6       disclosed by a seller under subsection (a) of this section may bring an action to  
7       recover from the seller the amount of the buyer's damages and reasonable  
8       attorney's fees. The buyer may also seek punitive damages when the seller  
9       knowingly failed to provide the required information.

10       (d) A seller shall not be liable for damages under this section for any error,  
11       inaccuracy, or omission of any information required to be disclosed to the  
12       buyer under subsection (a) of this section when the error, inaccuracy, or  
13       omission was based on information provided by a public body or by another  
14       person with a professional license or special knowledge who provided a  
15       written report that the seller reasonably believed to be correct and that was  
16       provided by the seller to the buyer.

17       (e) Noncompliance with the requirements of this section shall not affect the  
18       marketability of title of a real property.

1 Sec. 10. 9 V.S.A. chapter 137, subchapter 5 is added to read:

2 Subchapter 5. Disclosure of Information Prior to Entering Rental Agreement

3 § 4481. DEFINITIONS

4 As used in this subchapter:

5 (1) “Commercial or industrial property” means any real property that is  
6 used for a commercial or industrial use.

7 (2) “Landlord” means the owner, lessor, or where applicable sublessor  
8 of a residential dwelling or commercial or industrial building.

9 (3) “Rental agreement” means any agreement, written or oral, setting the  
10 terms and conditions for the use and occupancy of a residential dwelling unit  
11 or commercial or industrial property.

12 (4) “Residential dwelling unit” means a building or part of a building  
13 that is used as a home, residence, or sleeping place by one or more persons  
14 who maintain a household.

15 (5) “Tenant” means a person entitled under a rental agreement to occupy  
16 a residential dwelling or commercial or industrial property.

17 § 4482. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

18 (a) Prior to entering a rental agreement, the landlord shall provide the  
19 prospective tenant with the following information:

20 (1) whether the residential dwelling unit or commercial or industrial  
21 property is located in a Federal Emergency Management Agency mapped

1 flood hazard area or whether the residential dwelling unit or commercial or  
2 industrial property is located in a fluvial erosion hazard area mapped by a  
3 municipality;

4 (2) whether the residential dwelling unit or commercial or industrial  
5 property was ever subject to flooding; and

6 (3) the flood insurance rates for the residential dwelling unit or  
7 commercial or industrial property, if applicable.

8 § 4483. RIGHT TO TERMINATE

9 (a) Notwithstanding a contrary provision of a rental agreement or  
10 municipal ordinance governing residential dwelling units or commercial or  
11 industrial property, a tenant may terminate a rental agreement if the landlord  
12 fails to provide the information required under section 4482 of this title.

13 (b) Upon termination under this section, the landlord shall return the entire  
14 amount of any security deposit provided by the tenant and may not retain any  
15 portion of the security deposit otherwise authorized to be withheld by statute or  
16 municipal ordinance.

17 \* \* \* Dam Removal; Winooski River \* \* \*

18 Sec. 11. DAM REMOVAL; WINOOSKI RIVER WATERSHED

19 (a) In addition to other funds appropriated to the Agency of Natural  
20 Resources in fiscal year 2025, \$10,000,000.00 is appropriated from the  
21 General Fund to the Agency of Natural Resources so that the Dam Safety

1 Division at the Department of Environmental Conservation may contract with  
2 consultants or local groups to identify and expedite the removal of dams in the  
3 Winooski River watershed that pose a flood risk because of lack of  
4 maintenance or sediment retention.

5 (b) The initial efforts to identify and remove dams in the Winooski River  
6 watershed shall focus on dams within the city limits of Montpelier, provided  
7 that at least \$370,000.00 of the appropriations shall be set aside for the removal  
8 of the Jockey Hollow Dam located on the Stevens Branch in the city of Barre.

9 \* \* \* Hydrologic Model of Winooski River \* \* \*

10 Sec. 12. HYDROLOGIC MODEL OF WINOOSKI RIVER

11 (a) The Secretary of Natural Resources shall contract with a qualified entity  
12 or entities to complete a hydrologic model of the Winooski River watershed  
13 that allows for a better understanding of the flood risk posed by the river  
14 during alternative flood scenarios. The model shall consider:

15 (1) the source of flood risk, including unmanaged runoff from developed  
16 and undeveloped lands upstream from areas prone to flooding; and

17 (2) the optimal site-level implementation of best management practices  
18 for flood prevention, flood resiliency, or management of upstream runoff.

19 (b) Upon completion of the model, the Secretary of Natural Resources shall  
20 utilize the model results to prioritize where flood prevention, flood resiliency,

1 and management of upstream runoff measures should be implemented in the  
2 Winooski River watershed.

3 (c) In addition to other funds appropriated to the Agency of Natural  
4 resources in fiscal year 2025, \$1,000,000.00 from the General Fund is  
5 appropriated to the Agency for award of a contract to conduct the modeling  
6 required by this section.

7 \* \* \* Emergency Management Planners; Regional  
8 Planning Commissions \* \* \*

9 Sec. 13. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNERS; REGIONAL  
10 PLANNING COMMISSIONS

11 In addition to other funds appropriated to the Division of Vermont  
12 Emergency Management (VEM) at the Department of Public Safety in fiscal  
13 year 2025, \$700,000.00 from the General Fund is appropriated to the  
14 Department for the purpose of VEM awarding \$60,000.00 grants to each  
15 regional planning commission in the State for the purpose of combining the  
16 grant award with federal funding in order to hire a full-time emergency planner  
17 for each regional planning commission.

1           \* \* \* Best Management Practices for Rebuilding after Emergency \* \* \*

2           Sec. 14. BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR REBUILDING AFTER  
3   EMERGENCY

4           (a) The Division of Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) at the  
5           Department of Public Safety shall publish best management practices for  
6           rebuilding or repairing structures after damage from a flood or other hazard.

7           The best management practices shall address:

8                           (1) how to rebuild or repair to provide for flood resiliency;

9                           (2) how to avoid reconstruction or repair that increased flood risk or risk  
10           to property; and

11                          (3) where and how to replace or repair utility infrastructure to mitigate  
12           risk of harm to the infrastructure or to allow for shutdown or closure of a utility  
13           line in order to prevent further hazard from a utility line during an emergency.

14           (b) VEM shall publish the best management practices required by this  
15           section on or before July 1, 2025.

16   \* \* \* Reverse E-911 Policy \* \* \*

17           Sec. 15. REVERSE E-911 POLICY DURING EMERGENCY

18           The Enhanced 911 Board, in consultation with the Division of Vermont  
19           Emergency Management (VEM) at the Department of Public Safety, shall  
20           develop a policy for the use of the E-911 system to provide VT-Alerts more  
21           effectively and expeditiously during emergencies in order to reduce the risk of



1 harm to persons and property. The Board shall issue its policy on or before  
2 July 1, 2025.

3 \* \* \* Municipal Planning; Flood Resiliency \* \* \*

4 Sec. 16. 24 V.S.A. § 4302(c)(14) is amended to read:

5 (14) To encourage flood resilient communities.

6 (A) New development in identified flood hazard, fluvial erosion, and  
7 river corridor ~~protection~~ areas ~~should~~ shall be avoided or compliant with State  
8 model flood hazard area and river corridor bylaws. If new development is to  
9 be built in such areas, it ~~should~~ shall not exacerbate flooding and fluvial  
10 erosion.

11 (B) The protection and restoration of floodplains, river corridors,  
12 wetlands, and upland forested areas that attenuate and moderate flooding and  
13 fluvial erosion ~~should~~ shall be encouraged.

14 (C) Flood emergency preparedness and response planning should be  
15 encouraged.

16 Sec. 17. AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES RIPARIAN BUFFER  
17 PROGRAM

18 On or before January 1, 2025, the Agency of Natural Resources shall  
19 submit to the General Assembly a recommended program for establishing a  
20 riparian buffer of at least 50 feet along 100 percent of the river banks in the

1 State that are located outside established settlement areas. The  
2 recommendations shall include:

3 (1) criteria for when and how to establish a riparian buffer, including  
4 what uses would be allowed in a buffer;

5 (2) whether the size of riparian buffers should exceed 50 feet in certain  
6 flood-prone riparian areas;

7 (3) a mechanism for implementing required buffers along the rivers of  
8 the State, including whether the buffers should be mandated by legislation or  
9 incentivized and an estimate of how much a recommended mechanism would  
10 cost; and

11 (4) how a buffer program would be implemented and whether it should  
12 be the responsibility of State or municipal government.

13 \* \* \* Shelter Identification; Funding Shelter Operation \* \* \*

14 Sec. 18. VERMONT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT; SHELTER  
15 IDENTIFICATION

16 (a) The Division of Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) at the  
17 Department of Public Safety shall amend the Local Emergency Plan Template  
18 and any best management practices or guidance the Division issues to  
19 municipalities to address the need for the siting of municipal emergency  
20 shelters in a manner that allows access by those in need during an emergency  
21 or hazard.

1       (b) VEM shall advise municipalities that when a shelter is sited under a  
2       local emergency plan, the municipality should assess whether the physical  
3       location or characteristics of the surrounding area during an emergency or  
4       hazard could prevent access. Guidance to municipalities shall include not  
5       siting a shelter in proximity to a river or body of water subject to flooding and  
6       siting a shelter in a manner that is accessible by multiple routes so that  
7       individual road closures do not prohibit access.

8       (c) On or before January 15, 2025, VEM shall submit a proposal to the  
9       General Assembly on how the State shall fund the operation of municipal  
10       emergency shelters during a declared emergency. The proposal shall address  
11       funding for staff, supplies, utilities, and other expenses that municipalities  
12       currently fund when the State declares an emergency.

13                               \* \* \* Dam Safety Review \* \* \*

14       Sec. 19. DAM SAFETY REVIEW OF HIGH HAZARD POTENTIAL DAMS

15       The Dam Safety Program at the Department of Environmental Conservation  
16       shall review the emergency action plans and inundation maps for every dam in  
17       the State classified as high hazard potential at least every 10 years and within  
18       one month after every 100-year flood event affecting the dam.

1                   \* \* \* Floodproofing Wastewater Treatment Facilities \* \* \*

2           Sec. 20. FLOODPROOFING WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITIES

3           (a) As used in this section, “wastewater treatment facility” has the same  
4           meaning as in 10 V.S.A. § 1295.

5           (b) The Water Investment Division at the Department of Environmental  
6           Conservation shall establish a program to award grants to permitted  
7           wastewater treatment facilities in the State for the purpose of floodproofing  
8           each facility. The Division may establish criteria for award of grants under  
9           this section, including priority of award, actions eligible for award, application  
10           requirements, and timing of application and use of grant funds.

11           (c) In addition to other funds appropriated to the Department of  
12           Environmental Conservation in fiscal year 2025, \$2,000,000.00 from the  
13           General Fund is appropriated to the Department for administration of the  
14           wastewater treatment facility floodproofing grants required by this section.

15           Sec. 21. VCGI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT MAPPING POSITION

16           In addition to other funds appropriated to the Agency of Digital Services in  
17           fiscal year 2025, \$150,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the  
18           Agency for the purposes of funding a new permanent, full-time, classified  
19           position in the Vermont Center for Geographic Information for the purpose of  
20           creating emergency management interfaces or dashboards that allow for  
21           continual provision or supply of emergency management information to State

1 agencies and the public during the entire duration of an emergency or other  
2 hazard. The interface or dashboard would coordinate with any early warning  
3 system for emergencies or hazards and would provide tools for response to  
4 emergency needs, such as evacuation routes.

5 \* \* \* Better Roads Program; Culvert Replacement \* \* \*

6 Sec. 22. BETTER ROADS PROGRAM; CULVERT REPLACEMENT

7 In addition to other funds appropriated to the Agency of Transportation in  
8 fiscal year 2025, \$3,000,000.00 is appropriated from the Transportation Fund  
9 to the Municipal Mitigation Assistance Program at the Agency for the purpose  
10 of expanding funding of culvert replacement and upsizing to manage the  
11 increased severity and recurrence of flooding in the State. The State shall  
12 make a continued ongoing effort to fund the Better Roads Program at an  
13 amount that is at least consistent with the appropriation under this section.

14 \* \* \* Flood Recovery and Resilience Coordinator \* \* \*

15 Sec. 23. WINOOSKI RIVER; FLOOD RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

16 COORDINATOR

17 In addition to other funds appropriated to the Agency of Natural Resources  
18 in fiscal year 2025, \$125,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the  
19 Agency to provide a grant to the Friends of the Winooski River for the purpose  
20 of hiring a community flood recovery and resilience planning coordinator to

1 identify flood recovery and climate resilience projects in the Winooski River  
2 watershed.

3 \* \* \* Floodplain Access \* \* \*

4 Sec. 24. FLOODPLAIN RECONNECTION STUDY

5 In addition to other funds appropriated to the Agency of Natural Resources  
6 in fiscal year 2025, \$500,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the  
7 Agency to contract with the University of Vermont or other qualified  
8 contractor for the purpose of identifying the amount and location of floodplain  
9 in the Winooski River watershed that should be acquired or conserved in order  
10 to protect communities in the watershed from recurring flood events.

11 \* \* \* Work Search Waiver \* \* \*

12 Sec. 25. UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE; WORK SEARCH WAIVER;  
13 DECLARED DISASTER

14 The Commissioner of Labor shall waive the provisions of 21 V.S.A.  
15 § 1343(a) requiring an unemployment insurance claimant to engage in a search  
16 for suitable work during a declared emergency.

17 \* \* \* Effective Date \* \* \*

18 Sec. 26. EFFECTIVE DATE

19 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2024.