

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry to which was
3 referred House Bill No. 673 entitled “An act relating to Vermont’s outdoor
4 recreation economy” 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 Sec. 1. VERMONT OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMIC IMPACT
8 STUDY

9 (a) The Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC),
10 in consultation with the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council (VTGC) and
11 the Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance (VOBA), shall conduct the Vermont
12 Outdoor Recreation Economic Impact Study (the Study).

13 (b) The Study shall evaluate the following:

14 (1) the overall statewide economic impact of outdoor recreation;

15 (2) the county-level economic impact of outdoor recreation across the

16 State;

17 (3) how the economic impacts are distributed across recreational

18 activities and land ownership;

19 (4) the current carrying costs of outdoor recreation asset stewardship;

20 (5) the return on investment in outdoor recreation in Vermont;

21 (6) the top three opportunities for growth in the sector; and

1 (7) recommendations for future investments to maintain and grow
2 Vermont’s outdoor recreation economy.

3 (c) The organizations leading the Study shall hire a consultant to conduct
4 the economic analysis required.

5 (d) The Study may include additional data points as identified by VOREC,
6 VTGC, VOBA, and the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreations. The
7 Study shall also incorporate findings from VOREC’s Move Forward Together
8 Vermont planning process.

9 (e) In fiscal year 2025, the sum of \$200,000.00 is appropriated from the
10 General Fund to VOREC to hire the consultant to conduct the economic
11 analysis required under this section.

12 (f) On or before December 15, 2025, VOREC and the Commissioner shall
13 report back to the House Committees on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and
14 Forestry and on Commerce and Economic Development and the Senate
15 Committees on Agriculture and on Economic Development, Housing and
16 General Affairs on the findings of the Study and propose local and State
17 investment opportunities to bolster the economic benefit of the outdoor
18 recreation economy.

19 Sec. 2. POSITION; VERMONT TRAILS AND GREENWAYS COUNCIL

20 In fiscal year 2025, the sum of \$100,000.00 is appropriated from the
21 General Fund to the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation for one full-

1 time program support specialist whose duties shall be to the Vermont Trails
2 and Greenways Council (VTGC) to:

3 (1) administer membership to the VTGC;

4 (2) manage VTGC meetings, activities, operations, and budget;

5 (3) routinely assess the needs of the Vermont trail stewardship
6 community;

7 (4) develop, manage, and deploy technical assistance resources for
8 VTGC members; and

9 (5) execute the VTGC’s advisory role to the Agency of Natural
10 Resources, as defined in 10 V.S.A. § 443.

11 Sec. 3. APPROPRIATION

12 In fiscal year 2025, the sum of \$50,000.00 is appropriated from the General
13 Fund to the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation for the purpose of
14 hiring a contractor, in partnership with Vermont Trails and Greenways Council
15 to develop of a set of universal trail best management practices (BMPs). The
16 BMPs shall aggregate existing BMPs from both the Department and nonprofit
17 trail stewardship organizations, with the intent of these BMPs being adopted
18 for the Vermont Trail System to ensure all public access trails are built and
19 maintained to a high standard. These aggregated BMPs may include practices
20 related to:

- 1 (1) trail planning and design, including permissions, siting, access, and
- 2 local coordination;
- 3 (2) trail construction, including permitting, corridor clearing, soil and
- 4 soil management, stream crossings, wildlife, and safety;
- 5 (3) trail use and management, including usage guidelines, monitoring,
- 6 wildlife, and community engagement; and
- 7 (4) trail maintenance, including planning, permissions, signage, safety,
- 8 and addressing on-call issues.

9 Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

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

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15 (Committee vote: _____)

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Representative _____

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FOR THE COMMITTEE