

§ 2803. CONSERVATION PLAN

(1) On or before July 15, 2023, the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board (VHCB), in partnership with the Secretary, shall convene a stakeholder working group to develop a statewide conservation plan to ~~implement the conservation goals of Vermont Conservation Design to~~ meet the goals established in section 2802 of this title. The plan shall be submitted for review to the relevant Committees on or before December 1, 2024.

(2) The plan shall include:

(A) a review of the three conservation categories defined in section 2801 of this title, and suggestions for modifications or additions to these categories;

(B) an initial inventory of the amount of land and waters in Vermont that is permanently conserved and to the extent practical, the amount of permanently conserved land that generally falls into each of the three conservation categories defined in section 2801 of this title, including public and private land;

(C) ~~an evaluation of the impact of intergenerational land transfer trends;~~

~~(D)~~ a summary of the totality of conservation and land protection practices available for reaching the goals of this chapter, including what they are, what they do, how they contribute, and what metrics are available to quantify them;

~~(E)~~ an assessment of how State lands will can be used managed to ~~increase achieve the characteristics of~~ ecological reserve areas;

~~(F)~~ the implementation methods for achieving the goals of this chapter using Vermont Conservation Design and other existing conservation planning tools as a guide;

~~(G)~~ an inventory and assessment of existing programs that will be used to meet the permanent, nonconversion conservation goals of this chapter and recommendations for new programs that will be needed to meet the goals;

~~(G)~~ an equity assessment of existing land protection and conservation strategies and programs and recommendations to increase equitable access to protected and conserved lands and land-based enterprises; and

(H) an assessment of existing funding and recommendations for new funding sources that will be needed for acquisition or easements of land, staffing capacity, long-term stewardship, and necessary inventory and tracking to meet the goals.

(3) In developing the plan, ~~the Secretary shall hold not less than three public meetings on the plan and accept public comments.~~ VHCB and the Secretary shall solicit input from various stakeholders, including private owners of forest and agricultural lands, land trusts, conservation

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House Environment and Energy – H.126

VHCB Recommended Edits, Per 2/2/23 Testimony

Submitted by Trey Martin, Director of Conservation and Rural Community Development

organizations, ~~the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board~~, environmental organizations, working lands enterprises, outdoor recreation groups, Indigenous groups and representatives from historically marginalized and disadvantaged communities, municipalities, regional planning commissions, conservation commissions, and relevant State and federal agencies.

(4) The conserved land inventory mandated in section 2803(2)(B) shall be updated every five years by VHCB and the Secretary to track progress toward meeting the goals of this chapter and a report submitted to relevant Committees by January 15 of each year.