



March 12, 2024

To: House Committee on Energy & Environment  
From: David Snedeker, Executive Director, NVDA

Re: H. 687 and Future Land Use Mapping

Chair Sheldon & House Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on bill H.687, and specifically the mapping component of Future Land Use areas and working with our municipalities.

Currently, under 24 VSA, Chapter 117, Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) are required to prepare a regional plan consistent with the goals established in statute, and compatible with municipal and adjoining regional plans. Regional plans, which include required maps, are developed with significant public engagement and participation, and are ultimately adopted by our member municipalities.

With the changes to planning statute(s) currently proposed in bill H.687, including those which would determine how Future Land Use areas are mapped, we don't see any significant or problematic challenges in maintaining and adopting our regional plans. The methodology for mapping Future Land Use areas is new and will require conversations with the VAPDA (RPC) network, state agencies, and our member municipalities. This may be a longer process than in previous years, but December 31, 2026 deadline that is currently proposed in H.687 seems sufficient.

Another change proposed in H.687 is the creation of a new Environmental Review Board (ERB), which will be reviewing and approving regional plans. Because the ERB is a new entity, we are less certain about their process and timing.

Speaking to the capacity of larger RPC regions such as NVDA (3 counties and 50 municipalities), NVDA does have 3 experienced persons currently on staff with GIS capabilities. NVDA is also part of the VAPDA network of 11 RPCs who also have GIS-trained staff if additional help is needed. Lastly, NVDA is collocated with a private geospatial data technology company that we have worked with on multiple municipal and regional mapping efforts if additional assistance is needed.

I am also sharing with the Committee an example of a spreadsheet that NVDA uses to track the status of municipal planning and zoning in our region. This is updated on an annual basis as we work with our communities.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to speak with your committee, and thank you all for your efforts for Vermont. You may contact me at [dsnedeker@nvda.net](mailto:dsnedeker@nvda.net) or at (802) 748-8303 if you have any further questions.

Respectfully,

David Snedeker  
Executive Director  
Northeastern VT Development Association