

BILL SUMMARY

“An act relating to natural disaster government response, recovery, and resiliency”

Part 1. Creation of the Community Resilience and Disaster Mitigation Fund (Secs. 1-3)

This bill incorporates all sections of [S.145](#) (an act relating to the Community Resilience and Disaster Mitigation Fund), except for the findings. These sections create a Community Resilience and Disaster Mitigation Grant Program to be administered by the Department of Public Safety for the purpose of awarding grants for municipal disaster mitigation projects. A \$15,000,000 appropriation will initially stand-up the fund.

- The prior Sec. 4 amending 32 V.S.A. § 8557 (Vermont Fire Service Training Council) to include an annual assessment of \$4,300,000 on insurance companies writing disaster-related policies has been removed, leaving the existing funding mechanism for the Vermont Fire Service Training Council in place.

Part 2. Emergency Management Personnel (Secs. 4-6)

This bill incorporates all sections of [S.250](#) (an act relating to emergency management personnel). These sections create a definition of “emergency management personnel” to include public works personnel, who will be treated akin to traditional emergency-oriented professions, like firefighters and police, for the purposes of emergency response.

- The term “emergency management personnel” has been updated to “emergency response personnel” to clarify that management personnel is a sub-group of response personnel.

Part 3. Municipal Stormwater Utilities (Secs. 7-9)

This bill incorporates elements of [S.243](#) (an act relating to the formation of stormwater utility districts). These sections modify how stormwater rates are assessed and how the associated revenue may be used. Sewage system commissioners may now set stormwater rates for equivalent residential units based on an average area of impervious surface on residential property within the municipality. Revenues may be used for stormwater management, control, and treatment; flood resiliency; floodplain restoration; and other similar measures. These sections also permit municipalities to jointly apply for grants from the Agency of Natural Resources to support stormwater utility operations.

Part 4. Creation of the Urban Search and Rescue Team (Sec. 10)

This bill incorporates Sec. 6 of [H.627](#) (an act relating to emergency preparedness and hazard response). This section will create the Urban Search and Rescue Team within the Department of Public Safety.

- Updated to enable the USAR Team chief to also negotiate and enter into agreements with State-recognized swiftwater rescue teams.

Part 5. Vermont-211 Information Privacy (Sec. 11)

This section requires Vermont 211 to keep confidential any personal information acquired from victims of natural disasters except for coordinating relief work for affected individuals.

Part 6. Reverse E-911 Policy (Sec. 12-13)

This section requires , in consultation with the Enhanced E-911 Board, to develop a policy using E-911 to provide more effective VT-Alerts in large emergencies. This bill proposes to require a policy making E-911 and VT-Alerts more responsive in large emergencies, to have VoIP service providers provide subscriber information to the Enhanced 911 Board, and to require required to telecommunications companies to notify their customers of outages impacting communication with 911 or receiving emergency notifications.

- Updated to include VoIP subscriber information and 911 outages requirements.

Part 7. Best Management Practices for Rebuilding after Emergency (Sec. 14)

This bill incorporates Secs. 14, 15, and 18 of [H.723](#) (an act relating to flood recovery), and all of [S. 223](#) (an act relating to the assessment of the Vermont Emergency Management Division's disaster preparedness). This section requires the Department of Public Safety's Division of Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) to review the adequacy of (1) early warning and evacuation orders; (2) designated evacuation routes and emergency shelters; (3) the present system of local emergency management directors in wide-spread emergencies; and (4) the State's present emergency communications systems. VEM will also publish best management practices for rebuilding after emergencies and report back to both the House and Senate Committees on Government Operations on both the outcome of the review and the best management practices.

Part 8. Shelter Identification; Funding Shelter Operation (Secs. 15)

This section requires VEM will publish best management practices for the placement and funding of local emergency shelters.

Part 9. Interpretation Services for State Emergency Communications (Sec. 16)

This section requires VEM to ensure interpretation services are being provided to individuals who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind and to individuals with limited English proficiency for all State emergency communications.

- Updated to require VEM to ensure interpretation services are being provided to individuals with limited English proficiency.

Part 10. Creation of Chief Climate Resilience Officer (Sec. 17)

This section creates a Chief Climate Resilience Officer in the Department of Public Safety.

Part 11. Post-Secondary Disaster Management Programs (Sec. 18)

This section will require the Vermont State University and the President or designee for the University of Vermont report on potentially creating post-secondary disaster management programs.

Part 12. Effective Date (Sec. 19)

This act shall take effect on passage.