

Forest Blocks and Affordable Housing

_____ moves to amend the bill as follows:

First, By amending 24 V.S.A. section 4382(a)(2)(D) to read:

§ 4382. The plan for a municipality

(a) A plan for a municipality shall be consistent with the goals established in section 4302 of this title and compatible with approved plans of other municipalities in the region and with the regional plan and shall include the following: * * *

(2) A land use plan, which shall consist of a map and statement of present and prospective land uses, that: * * *

(D) Indicates those areas that are important as forest blocks and habitat connectors and plans for land development in those areas to minimize forest fragmentation and promote the health, viability, and ecological function of forests. A plan may include specific policies to encourage the active management of those areas for wildlife habitat, water quality, timber production, recreation, or other values or functions identified by the municipality. The plan shall consider science-based data relating to the location of priority forest blocks and habitat connectors. The plan shall explain how the municipality intends to protect forest blocks and habitat corridors while meeting the housing needs of the municipality.

Second, By adding 24 V.S.A. section 4412(14) to read:

§ 4412. Required provisions and prohibited effects

Notwithstanding any existing bylaw, the following land development provisions shall apply in every municipality:

(14) Bylaws shall designate appropriate districts and reasonable regulations for the protection of forest blocks and habitat corridors. District boundaries shall consider science-based data relating to the location of priority forest blocks and habitat connectors. The boundaries of zoning districts protecting forest blocks and habitat corridors, and the reasonable regulation thereof, may give appropriate consideration to the municipality's need for housing and affordable housing. Upon petition by not less than x% of the legal voters of the municipality, the municipality shall hold an election pursuant to section xxx of this title on the following question: "Yes or No. Has the town of _____ reasonably protected forest blocks and habitat corridors." In the case of a negative vote, the planning commission shall propose within xxx days of the election to amend the municipal bylaws to better protect forest blocks and habitat corridors while giving appropriate consideration to the municipality's need for housing and affordable housing.