

1 H.231

2 An act relating to technical corrections to fish and wildlife statutes

3 The Senate proposes to the House to amend the bill by striking out all after  
4 the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

5 Sec. 1. 10 V.S.A. § 4001 is amended to read:

6 § 4001. DEFINITIONS

7 Words and phrases used in this part, unless otherwise provided, shall be  
8 construed to mean as follows:

9 \* \* \*

10 (6) ~~Pickrel: the great northern pike, chain pickerel, or muskellunge.~~

11 [Repealed.]

12 (7) ~~Pike perch: walleyed or yellow pike.~~ [Repealed.]

13 \* \* \*

14 Sec. 2. 10 V.S.A. § 4905 is amended to read:

15 § 4905. BIRDS' NESTS AND EGGS; DESTROYING OR ROBBING

16 A person shall not take or ~~wilfully~~ willfully destroy the nests or eggs of  
17 wild birds, other than rock pigeons, ~~the English sparrow, starling, or purple~~  
18 ~~grackle~~ house sparrows, or European starlings, except when necessary to  
19 protect buildings and the nests to be removed contain no eggs or chicks and are  
20 no longer being used by birds for feeding, or when taken as provided in section  
21 4152 of this title.

1 Sec. 3. 10 V.S.A. § 4502 is amended to read:

2 § 4502. UNIFORM POINT SYSTEM; REVOCATION OF LICENSE

3 (a) A uniform point system that assigns points to those convicted of a  
4 violation of a provision of this part is established. The conviction report from  
5 the court shall be prima facie evidence of the points assessed. In addition to  
6 other penalties assessed for violation of fish and wildlife statutes, the  
7 Commissioner shall suspend licenses issued under this part that are held by a  
8 person who has accumulated 10 or more points in accordance with the  
9 provisions of subsection (c) of this section.

10 (b) A person violating provisions of this part shall receive points for  
11 convictions in accordance with the following schedule (all sections are in this  
12 title of the Vermont Statutes Annotated):

13 (1) Except for biological collection violations determined to be nonpoint  
14 violations under the rules of the Board, five points shall be assessed for any  
15 violation of statutes or rules adopted under this part except those listed in  
16 subdivisions (2) and (3) of this subsection.

17 (2) Ten points shall be assessed for:

18 \* \* \*

19 (I) ~~§ 4706. Snaring animals~~ [Repealed.]

20 \* \* \*

1 (Y) Appendix § 2; ~~Appendix § 33, section 14.3.~~ Reporting of big  
2 game

3 \* \* \*

4 (II) Appendix § 37, ~~as it applies to annual deer limits~~ section 10.  
5 Novice season

6 (JJ) § 4742a. Youth deer hunting weekend. The points shall be  
7 assessed solely against the adult who is accompanying the youth hunter.

8 (KK) § 4908. Youth turkey hunting weekend. The points assessed  
9 against the adult accompanying the youth hunter.

10 (LL) § 4256. Mentored hunting license. The points shall be assessed  
11 against the licensed adult who is accompanying the individual holding the  
12 mentored hunting license.

13 (MM) § 4827a. Feeding a black bear

14 (NN) § 4826. Taking deer doing damage

15 (OO) § 22a. Taking turkey doing damage

16 (PP) § 35. Taking moose doing damage

17 (QQ) ~~Appendix § 22, section 6.7; Appendix § 33, section 13.1(g);~~

18 ~~Appendix § 37, section 7.7. Possession or transport of a cocked crossbow in or~~  
19 ~~on a motor vehicle, motorboat, airplane, snowmobile, or other motor propelled~~  
20 ~~vehicle~~ [Repealed.]



\* \* \*

\* \* \*

19     within the right-of-way of a public highway any of the following:

1           (A) a rifle, air rifle, arrow rifle, pre-charged pneumatic rifle, or  
2   shotgun containing a loaded cartridge ~~or~~, shell, or other projectile in the  
3   chamber, mechanism, or in a magazine, or clip within a rifle or shotgun, ~~or~~;

4           (B) a muzzle-loading rifle or muzzle-loading shotgun that has been  
5   charged with powder and projectile and the ignition system of which has been  
6   enabled by having an affixed or attached percussion cap, primer, battery, or  
7   priming powder, except as permitted under subsections (d) and (e) of this  
8   section; and

9           (C) unless it is uncocked, a crossbow in or on a motor vehicle,  
10   motorboat, airplane, snowmobile, or other motor-propelled craft or any vehicle  
11   drawn by a motor-propelled vehicle except as permitted under subsection (e) of  
12   this section.

13          (2) A person who possesses a rifle, crossbow, or shotgun, including a  
14   muzzle-loading rifle or muzzle-loading shotgun, in or on a vehicle propelled  
15   by mechanical power, or drawn by a vehicle propelled by mechanical power  
16   within a right-of-way of a public highway shall upon demand of an  
17   enforcement officer exhibit the firearm for examination to determine  
18   compliance with this section.

19          (3) As used in this subsection:

20           (A) “Air rifle” means a .22 or larger caliber device that fires a bullet  
21   solely by the use of unignited compressed gas as the propellant.

6 \* \* \*

7     Sec. 5. 23 V.S.A. § 3317(b) is amended to read:

(b) Penalty or fine; \$300.00 or \$1,000.00 maximum. A person who violates a requirement under 10 V.S.A. § 1454 shall be subject to enforcement under 10 V.S.A. § 8007 or 8008 or a fine under this chapter, provided that the person shall be assessed a penalty or fine of not more than \$1,000.00 for each violation. A person who violates a rule adopted under 10 V.S.A. § 1424 shall be subject to enforcement under 10 V.S.A. chapter 201 or a fine under this chapter, provided that the person shall be assessed a penalty of not more than \$300.00 for each violation. A person who violates any of the following sections of this title shall be subject to a penalty of not more than \$300.00 for each violation:

18 \* \* \*

1 Sec. 6. 4 V.S.A. § 1102 is amended to read:

2 § 1102. JUDICIAL BUREAU; JURISDICTION

3 (a) The Judicial Bureau is created within the Judicial Branch under the  
4 supervision of the Supreme Court.

5 (b) The Judicial Bureau shall have jurisdiction of the following matters:

6 \* \* \*

7 (19) Violations of rules adopted under 10 V.S.A. § 1424, relating to the  
8 use of public waters.

9 Sec. 7. 10 V.S.A. § 4255 is amended to read:

10 § 4255. LICENSE FEES

11 (a) Vermont residents may apply for licenses on forms provided by the  
12 Commissioner. Fees for each license shall be:

13 \* \* \*

14 (c) A permanent or free license may be secured on application to the  
15 Department by a person qualifying as follows:

16 \* \* \*

17 (2) A person who is legally blind who is a Vermont resident may receive  
18 a free permanent fishing license upon submittal of proper proof of blindness as  
19 the Commissioner shall require. A person who is legally blind who is a  
20 resident in a state that provides a reciprocal privilege for Vermont residents  
21 may receive a free one-year fishing license.



(4) A Vermont resident who is a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces and who is, or ever has been, 60 percent disabled as a result of a service-connected disability may receive a free fishing, hunting, or combination hunting and fishing license that shall include all big game licenses, except for a moose license, upon presentation of a certificate issued by the veterans' administration so certifying. A resident of a state that provides a reciprocal privilege for Vermont veterans and who would qualify for a free license under this subdivision if the person were a Vermont resident may receive a free one-year fishing, hunting, or combination hunting and fishing license.

21 \* \* \*

6       (8) A person with developmental disabilities who is a Vermont resident  
7       may receive a free permanent fishing license upon submission to the  
8       Commissioner of a statement signed by the person’s treating health care  
9       provider, as that term is defined in 18 V.S.A. § 9402, certifying that the person  
10       meets the definition of a person with development disabilities. “A person with  
11       developmental disabilities” has the same meaning as in 18 V.S.A. § 9302.

13        (n) The Commissioner shall maintain an accounting of lost revenue due to  
14        the issuance of free licenses. The Commissioner annually on or before January  
15        15 shall submit to the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Finance  
16        and the House Committees on Appropriations and on Ways and Means an  
17        accounting of lost revenue from the previous calendar year due to the issuance  
18        of free licenses.

20     § 4251. TAKING WILD ANIMALS AND FISH; LICENSE

1 (a) Except as provided in sections 4253 and 4254b of this title, a person  
2 shall not take wild animals or fish without first having procured a license  
3 therefor; provided, however, that a person under 15 years of age may take fish  
4 in accordance with this part and regulations of the Board, without first having  
5 procured a license therefor.

6 (b) The Commissioner of Fish and Wildlife may designate two days each  
7 calendar year as “free fishing days” for which no license shall be required.  
8 One day shall occur in the open water fishing season and one day shall occur  
9 during the ice fishing season.

10 (c) The Commissioner of Fish and Wildlife may designate Labor Day  
11 weekend each year as “free mentored fishing weekend,” during which up to  
12 four unlicensed anglers aged 15 years or older can fish with one licensed  
13 angler throughout this three-day period.

14 Sec. 9. 10 V.S.A. § 4613 is amended to read:

15 § 4613. FISHING TOURNAMENTS

16 (a) No person or organization shall hold a fishing tournament on the waters  
17 of the State without first obtaining a permit from the Department of Fish and  
18 Wildlife. Tournaments held on the Connecticut River, excluding Moore and  
19 Comerford Reservoirs, that do not utilize an access area in Vermont are not  
20 required to obtain a permit from the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

1 (b) A fishing tournament means a contest in which anglers pay a fee to  
2 enter and in which the entrants compete for a prize based on the quality or size  
3 of the fish they catch. A contest may run multiple days, but the days must be  
4 consecutive for that contest to be considered a single event. A tournament that  
5 limits the entrants to people below 15 years of age or a tournament held as part  
6 of a Special Olympics program shall be exempt from paying the fee required  
7 under subsection (d) of this section.

8 (c) The Commissioner shall adopt rules that establish the procedure for  
9 implementation of this section. The rules shall include a provision that an  
10 angler may not enter a fish that was caught and confined to an enclosed area  
11 prior to the beginning of the tournament.

12 (d) The Commissioner shall charge a fee ~~of \$50.00~~ based on the number of  
13 participants for each permit issued under this section and shall deposit the fee  
14 collected into the Fish and Wildlife Fund. Tournaments with up to 25  
15 participants shall pay a fee of \$10.00; tournaments with 26 to 50 participants  
16 shall pay a fee of \$30.00; and tournaments with more than 50 participants shall  
17 pay a fee of \$100.00.

18 Sec. 10. 10 V.S.A. § 4518 is amended to read:

19 § 4518. BIG GAME VIOLATIONS; THREATENED AND ENDANGERED  
20 SPECIES; SUSPENSION; VIOLATIONS

1       (a) Whoever violates a provision of this part or orders or rules of the Board  
2 ~~relating to taking, possessing, transporting, buying, or selling of big game;~~  
3 ~~relating to threatened or endangered species; or relating to the trade in covered~~  
4 ~~animal parts or products~~ that constitutes a big game violation shall be fined not  
5 more than ~~\$1,000.00~~ \$2,000.00 nor less than ~~\$400.00~~ \$500.00 or imprisoned  
6 for not more than 60 days, or both. Upon a second and all subsequent  
7 convictions or any conviction while under license suspension related to the  
8 requirements of part 4 of this title, the violator shall be fined not more than  
9 ~~\$4,000.00~~ \$5,000.00 nor less than \$2,000.00 or imprisoned for not more than  
10 ~~60~~ 180 days, or both.

11       (b) As used in this section, “big game violation” means:

12           (1) violations relating to taking, possessing, transporting, buying, or  
13 selling of big game;

14           (2) violations of chapter 123 of this title and the rules related to  
15 threatened and endangered species;

16           (3) violation of section 4280 of this title relating to criminal  
17 suspensions;

18           (4) violations of chapter 124 of this title relating to the trade in covered  
19 animal parts or products;

20           (5) interference with hunting, fishing, or trapping in violation of section  
21 4708 of this title; or

1       (6) illegal commercial importation or possession of wild animals in  
2       violation of section 4709 of this title.

3       Sec. 11. 10 V.S.A. § 4552 is amended to read:

4       § 4552. JURISDICTION; VENUE

5       The Vermont Criminal Division of the Superior Court shall have exclusive  
6       jurisdiction over fish and wildlife violations with the exception of violations  
7       related to section 4572 and chapters 123 and 124 of this title. Venue for  
8       adjudicating fish and wildlife violations shall be the unit of the Criminal  
9       Division of the Superior Court having jurisdiction over the geographical area  
10      where the offense is stated to have occurred.

11      Sec. 12. 10 V.S.A. § 4572 is amended to read:

12      § 4572. DEFINITIONS

13      (a) As used in this subchapter, a minor fish and wildlife violation means:

14           (1) a violation of 10 V.S.A. § 4145 (violation of access and landing area  
15      rules);

16           (2) a violation of 10 V.S.A. § 4251 (taking wild animals and fish  
17      without a license);

18           (3) a violation of 10 V.S.A. § 4266 (failure to carry a license on person  
19      or failure to exhibit license);

- 1           (4) a violation of 10 V.S.A. § 4267 (false statements in license  
2 application; altering license; transferring license to another person; using  
3 another person's license; or guiding an unlicensed person);
- 4           (5) a violation of 10 V.S.A. § 4713 (tree or ground stands or blinds); ~~or~~  
5           (6) [Repealed.]
- 6           (7) a violation of a biological collection rule adopted by the Board under  
7 part 4 of this title; or
- 8           (8) except for big game offenses and under revocation offenses, any fish  
9 and wildlife violation as defined by 10 V.S.A § 4551 and not otherwise listed  
10 in this section shall be charged as a minor violation, provided that:
- 11                 (A) the offender has no prior history of fish and wildlife violations;  
12                 (B) no evidence was seized in relation to the violation;  
13                 (C) a criminal warrant was not used in relation to the  
14 violation; and
- 15                 (D) there is no possibility of forfeiture.
- 16           (b) "Bureau" means the Judicial Bureau as created in 4 V.S.A. § 1102.
- 17   Sec. 13. 10 V.S.A. § 4085 is added to read:
- 18   § 4085. REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS; TAKING; POSSESSION
- 19           (a) A person shall not intentionally take a reptile or amphibian in the State  
20 unless authorized by rules adopted under subsection (b) of this section.

1       **(b) The Commissioner may establish requirements for the following by**  
2       **rule:**

3               **(1) the collection or possession for commercial use, export, or sale of**  
4       **reptiles and amphibians specified by the Commissioner;**

5               **(2) the taking of reptiles or amphibians that have been classified as**  
6       **common, widespread, and abundant, known as S5 ranked species, with stable**  
7       **or increasing populations indicated by data collected or compiled by the**  
8       **Department of Fish and Wildlife;**

9               **(3) the taking of a reptile or amphibian that due to population, risk to**  
10       **other native species, or risk to ecosystems has been identified as requiring a**  
11       **reduction in population; or**

12               **(4) under specified criteria, the taking, collection, or possession of a**  
13       **specified reptile or amphibian for scientific, educational, or noncommercial**  
14       **cultural or ceremonial purposes.**

15       **(c) Rules adopted by the Commissioner of Fish and Wildlife under this**  
16       **section shall be designed to maintain the best health, population, and utilization**  
17       **levels of the regulated reptile or amphibian.**

18       **Sec. 14. IMPORT, POSSESSION, AND SALE OF REPTILES AND**  
19       **AMPHIBIANS; ENDORSEMENTS**

20       **(a)(1) A person shall not import, possess, or sell in the State a pond slider**  
21       **turtle (Trachemys scripta), provided that:**



1           (A) a person may continue to possess a turtle that was legally  
2   acquired as a pet prior to July 1, 2025 or that was legally acquired from a pet  
3   dealer or commercial collection permittee authorized to sell turtles under  
4   subdivision (1)(B) of this subsection; or

5           (B) a person with a valid pet dealer permit or commercial collection  
6   permit may possess and sell a turtle that the person can document they had  
7   possession of prior to July 1, 2025.

8           (2) A person is prohibited from releasing to the wild a pond slider  
9   retained as a pet under this subsection. A violation of the prohibition under  
10   this section shall be subject to enforcement as a fish and wildlife violation  
11   under Title 10 part 4.

12          (b) Subsection (a) of this section shall be repealed on the effective date of a  
13   rule adopted by the Commissioner of Fish and Wildlife under 10 V.S.A.  
14   § 4085 regulating the import, possession, or sale of the pond slider turtle  
15   (Trachemys scripta).

16          (c) When the Commissioner of Fish and Wildlife under 10 V.S.A.  
17   § 4085(b) authorizes the taking of a reptile or amphibian by hunting, a hunting  
18   license issued under 10 V.S.A. part 4 that authorizes the taking of reptiles and  
19   amphibians under the license shall include an endorsement indicating the  
20   authorized taking.

1 Sec. 15. 10 V.S.A. § 4709 is amended to read:

2 § 4709. TRANSPORT, IMPORTATION, POSSESSION, AND STOCKING  
3 OF WILD ANIMALS; POSSESSION OF WILD BOAR OR FERAL  
4 SWINE

5 (a) A person shall not bring into, transport into, transport within, transport  
6 through, or possess in the State any live wild bird or animal of any kind,  
7 including reptiles, amphibians, or any manner of feral swine, without  
8 authorization from the Commissioner or ~~his or her~~ the Commissioner's  
9 designee. The importation permit may be granted under ~~such regulations~~  
10 ~~therefor as~~ rules, requirements, or conditions that the Commissioner shall  
11 prescribe and only after the Commissioner has made such investigation and  
12 inspection of the birds or animals as ~~she or he~~ the Commissioner may deem  
13 necessary. The Department may dispose of unlawfully possessed or imported  
14 wildlife as it may judge best, and the State may collect treble damages from the  
15 violator of this subsection for all expenses incurred.

16 (b) No person shall bring into the State from another country, state, or  
17 province wildlife illegally taken, transported, or possessed contrary to the laws  
18 governing the country, state, or province from which the wildlife originated.

19 (c) No person shall place a Vermont-issued tag on wildlife taken outside  
20 the State. No person shall report big game in Vermont when the wildlife is  
21 taken outside the State.

1 (d) Nothing in this section shall prohibit the Commissioner or duly  
2 authorized agents of the Department of Fish and Wildlife from bringing into  
3 the State for the purpose of planting, introducing, or stocking or from planting,  
4 introducing, or stocking in the State any wild bird or animal.

5 (e) Any person who violates this section may be subject to the penalties set  
6 forth in section 4518 of this title and also may be required to pay additional  
7 penalties based on reasonable mitigation and potential economic benefit  
8 associated with commercial trade.

9 (f) The Commissioner may bring an action in the unit of the Criminal  
10 Division of the Superior Court having jurisdiction over the geographical area  
11 where the offense is stated to have occurred, or the Environmental Division of  
12 the Superior Court, to compel reasonable mitigation and recover economic  
13 benefits for commercial collection and trade violations under this subsection.

14 (g) Applicants shall pay a permit fee of \$100.00.

15 ~~(f)~~(h)(1) The Commissioner shall not issue a permit under this section for  
16 the importation or possession of the following live species, a hybrid or genetic  
17 variant of the following species, offspring of the following species, or  
18 offspring or a hybrid of a genetically engineered variant of the following  
19 species: feral swine, including wild boar, wild hog, wild swine, feral pig, feral  
20 hog, old world swine, razorback, Eurasian wild boar, or Russian wild boar (*Sus*  
21 *scrofa* Linnaeus). A feral swine is:

1 \* \* \*

2 Sec. 16. 10 V.S.A. § 5403(a) is amended to read:

3 (a) Except as authorized under this chapter, a person shall not:

4 (1) take, possess, or transport wildlife or wild plants that are members of  
5 a threatened or endangered species; ~~or~~

6 (2) destroy or adversely impact critical habitat;

7 (3) sell or offer for sale in intrastate commerce a threatened or  
8 endangered species;

9 (4) deliver, receive, carry, transport, or ship a threatened or endangered  
10 species in intrastate commerce; or

11 (5) import a threatened or endangered species into or export a threatened  
12 or endangered species from Vermont.

13 Sec. 17. 10 V.S.A. § 5408 is amended to read:

14 § 5408. AUTHORIZED TAKINGS; INCIDENTAL TAKINGS;

15 DESTRUCTION OF CRITICAL HABITAT

16 (a) Authorized taking. Notwithstanding any provision of this chapter, after  
17 obtaining the advice of the Endangered Species Committee, the Secretary may  
18 permit, under such terms and conditions as the Secretary may require as  
19 necessary to carry out the purposes of this chapter, the taking of a threatened or  
20 endangered species, the destruction of or adverse impact on critical habitat, or

1 any act otherwise prohibited by this chapter if done for any of the following  
2 purposes:

3 (1) scientific purposes;

4 (2) to enhance the propagation or survival of a threatened or endangered  
5 species;

6 (3) zoological exhibition;

7 (4) educational purposes;

8 (5) noncommercial cultural or ceremonial purposes; or

9 (6) special purposes consistent with the purposes of the federal  
10 Endangered Species Act.

11 (b) Incidental taking. After obtaining the advice of the Endangered Species  
12 Committee, the Secretary may permit, under such terms and conditions as  
13 necessary to carry out the purposes of this chapter, the incidental taking of a  
14 threatened or endangered species or the destruction of or adverse impact on  
15 critical habitat if:

16 (1) the taking is necessary to conduct an otherwise lawful activity;

17 (2) the taking is attendant or secondary to, and not the purpose of, the  
18 lawful activity;

19 (3) the impact of the permitted incidental take is minimized; and

20 (4) the incidental taking will not impair the conservation or recovery of  
21 any endangered species or threatened species.

1 \* \* \*

2 (k) Public notice. ~~Prior~~ Except for threatened and endangered species  
3 listed by the Secretary in accordance with subsection 5410(b) of this title, prior  
4 to issuing a permit for an incidental taking and prior to the initial issuance or  
5 amendment of a general permit under this section, the Secretary shall provide  
6 for public notice of ~~no~~ not fewer than 30 days; opportunity for written  
7 comment; and opportunity to request a public informational hearing. ~~The~~  
8 Except for threatened and endangered species listed by the Secretary in  
9 accordance with subsection 5410(b) of this title, the Secretary shall post permit  
10 applications, permit decisions, and the initial or amended general permits on  
11 the website of the Agency of Natural Resources. ~~The~~ Except for threatened and  
12 endangered species listed by the Secretary in accordance with subsection  
13 5410(b) of this title, the Secretary also shall provide notice to interested  
14 persons who request notice of permit applications, permit decisions, and  
15 proposed general permits or proposed amendments to general permits.

16 (l) General permits.

17 (1) The Secretary may issue general permits for activities that will not  
18 affect the continued survival or recovery of a threatened or endangered species.

19 \* \* \*



- 1           (1) to the owner of land upon which the species is located;
- 2           (2) to a potential buyer of land upon which the species is located who
- 3           has a bona fide contract to buy the land and applies to the Secretary for
- 4           disclosure of threatened or endangered species information; ~~or~~
- 5           (3) to qualified individuals or organizations, public agencies, and
- 6           nonprofit organizations for scientific research or for preservation and planning
- 7           purposes when the Secretary determines that the preservation of the species is
- 8           not further endangered by the disclosure; or
- 9           (4) during regulatory processes with the exception of threatened or
- 10          endangered species listed under subsection (b) of this section.
- 11          (b) The Secretary shall maintain a subset list of threatened and endangered
- 12          species whose specific names shall not be included in regulatory planning.
- 13          The subset list shall include threatened or endangered species for which the
- 14          species names and locations shall not be disclosed because of the risk that the
- 15          species will be significantly harmed by unauthorized take, such as illegal
- 16          collection, commercial trade, human-caused mortality, or destruction of
- 17          habitat. The list shall be based on the rarity of the species, known collection
- 18          and commercial trade activities in Vermont and other states or countries,
- 19          incidents of human-caused mortality or destruction of habitat, and other factors
- 20          that present a threat to the continued existence of the species.



1       (c) When the Secretary issues a permit under this chapter to take a  
2       threatened or endangered species or destroy or adversely impact critical habitat  
3       and when the Secretary designates critical habitat by rule under section 5402a  
4       of this title, the Secretary shall disclose only the municipality and general  
5       location where the threatened or endangered species or designated critical  
6       habitat is located. When the Secretary designates critical habitat under section  
7       5402a of this title, the Secretary shall notify the municipality in which the  
8       critical habitat is located and shall disclose the general location of the  
9       designated critical habitat.

10      Sec. 19. 10 V.S.A. § 4829 is amended to read:

11      § 4829. ~~PERSON SUFFERING DAMAGE BY DEER OR BLACK BEAR~~

12       ~~(a) A person engaged in the business of farming who suffers damage by~~  
13       ~~deer to the person's crops, fruit trees, or crop bearing plants on land not posted~~  
14       ~~against the hunting of deer, or a person engaged in the business of farming who~~  
15       ~~suffers damage by black bear to the person's cattle, sheep, swine, poultry, or~~  
16       ~~bees or bee hives on land not posted against hunting or trapping of black bear~~  
17       ~~is entitled to reimbursement for the damage up to an amount not to exceed~~  
18       ~~\$5,000.00 per year, and may apply to the Department of Fish and Wildlife~~  
19       ~~within 72 hours of the occurrence of the damage for reimbursement for the~~  
20       ~~damage. As used in this section, "post" means any signage that would lead a~~  
21       ~~reasonable person to believe that hunting is prohibited on the land.~~

1       ~~(b) As used in this section, a person is “engaged in the business of farming”~~  
2       ~~if he or she earns at least one-half of the farmer’s annual gross income from the~~  
3       ~~business of farming, as that term is defined in the Internal Revenue Code, 26~~  
4       ~~C.F.R. § 1.175-3. [Repealed.]~~

5       Sec. 20. 10 V.S.A. § 599a is amended to read:

6       § 599a. REPORTS; RULEMAKING

7       (a) On or before January 15, 2025, the Agency, in consultation with the  
8       State Treasurer, shall submit a report to the General Assembly detailing the  
9       feasibility and progress of carrying out the requirements of this chapter,  
10      including any recommendations for improving the administration of the  
11      Program.

12      (b) The Agency shall adopt rules necessary to implement the requirements  
13      of this chapter, including:

14           (1) adopting methodologies using available science and publicly  
15      available data to identify responsible parties and determine their applicable  
16      share of covered greenhouse gas emissions; and

17           (2) requirements for registering entities that are responsible parties and  
18      issuing notices of cost recovery demands under the Program; ~~and~~

19           ~~(3) the Resilience Implementation Strategy, which shall include:~~

20                   ~~(A) practices utilizing nature-based solutions intended to stabilize~~  
21      ~~floodplains, riparian zones, lake shoreland, wetlands, and similar lands;~~

- 1           ~~(B) practices to adapt infrastructure to the impacts of climate change;~~  
2           ~~(C) practices needed to build out early warning mechanisms and~~  
3 ~~support fast, effective response to climate related threats;~~  
4           ~~(D) practices that support economic and environmental sustainability~~  
5 ~~in the face of changing climate conditions; and~~  
6           ~~(E) criteria and procedures for prioritizing climate change adaptation~~  
7 ~~projects eligible to receive monies from the Climate Superfund Cost Recovery~~  
8 ~~Program.~~

9           (c) On or before September 15, 2025, the Secretary shall submit to the  
10 House Committee on Environment and the Senate Committee on Natural  
11 Resources and Energy a report summarizing the Agency of Natural Resources'  
12 adoption of the Resilience Implementation Strategy. The Strategy shall  
13 include:

- 14           (1) practices utilizing nature-based solutions intended to stabilize  
15 floodplains, riparian zones, lake shoreland, wetlands, and similar lands;  
16           (2) practices to adapt infrastructure to the impacts of climate change;  
17           (3) practices needed to build out early warning mechanisms and support  
18 fast, effective response to climate-related threats;  
19           (4) practices that support economic and environmental sustainability in  
20 the face of changing climate conditions; and

1       (5) criteria and procedures for prioritizing climate change adaptation  
2       projects eligible to receive monies from the Climate Superfund Cost Recovery  
3       Program.

4       (d) In adopting the Strategy, the Agency shall:

5           (1) consult with the Environmental Justice Advisory Council;

6           (2) in consultation with other State agencies and departments, including  
7       the Department of Public Safety's Division of Vermont Emergency  
8       Management, assess the adaptation needs and vulnerabilities of various areas  
9       vital to the State's economy, normal functioning, and the health and well-being  
10      of Vermonters;

11          (3) identify major potential, proposed, and ongoing climate change  
12      adaptation projects throughout the State;

13          (4) identify opportunities for alignment with existing federal, State, and  
14      local funding streams;

15          (5) consult with stakeholders, including local governments, businesses,  
16      environmental advocates, relevant subject area experts, and representatives of  
17      environmental justice focus populations;

18          (6) consider components of the Vermont Climate Action Plan required  
19      under section 592 of this title that are related to adaptation or resilience, as  
20      defined in section 590 of this title; and

1           (7) conduct public engagement in areas and communities that have the  
2   most significant exposure to the impacts of climate change, including  
3   disadvantaged, low-income, and rural communities and areas.

4       ~~(d)~~(e) Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the existing  
5   authority of a State agency, department, or entity to regulate greenhouse gas  
6   emissions or establish strategies or adopt rules to mitigate climate risk and  
7   build resilience to climate change.

8   Sec. 21. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 122, Sec. 3 is amended to read:

9       Sec. 3. IMPLEMENTATION

10       (a) ~~On or before July 1, 2025, the Agency of Natural Resources pursuant to~~  
11   ~~3 V.S.A. § 837 shall file with the Interagency Committee on Administrative~~  
12   ~~Rules the proposed rule for the adoption of the Resilience Implementation~~  
13   ~~Strategy required pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 599a(b)(3). On or before January 1,~~  
14   ~~2026, the Agency of Natural Resources shall adopt the final rule establishing~~  
15   ~~the Resilience Implementation Strategy required pursuant to 10 V.S.A.~~  
16   ~~§ 599a(b)(3). [Repealed.]~~

17       (b) On or before July 1, ~~2026~~ 2027, the Agency of Natural Resources  
18   pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 837 shall file with the Interagency Committee on  
19   Administrative Rules the proposed rules required pursuant to 10 V.S.A. §  
20   599a(b)(1) and (b)(2). On or before January 1, ~~2027~~ 2028, the Agency of

1 Natural Resources shall adopt the final rule rules required pursuant to 10

2 V.S.A. § 599a(b)(1) and (b)(2).

3 Sec. 22. 10 V.S.A. § 596 is amended to read:

4 § 596. DEFINITIONS

5 As used in this chapter:

6 \* \* \*

7 (7) “Covered greenhouse gas emissions” means the total quantity of  
8 greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere ~~during the covered period,~~  
9 expressed in metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent, resulting from the use of  
10 fossil fuels extracted or refined by an entity during the covered period.

11 \* \* \*

12 (22) “Responsible party” means any entity or a successor in interest to  
13 an entity that during any part of the covered period was engaged in the trade or  
14 business of extracting fossil fuel or refining crude oil and is determined by the  
15 Agency attributable to for more than one billion metric tons of covered  
16 greenhouse gas emissions ~~during the covered period.~~ The term responsible  
17 party does not include any person who lacks sufficient connection with the  
18 State to satisfy the nexus requirements of the U.S. Constitution.

19 \* \* \*

1 Sec. 23. 10 V.S.A. § 598(b) is amended to read:

2 (b) With respect to each responsible party, the cost recovery demand shall  
3 be equal to an amount that bears the same ratio to the cost to the State of  
4 Vermont and its residents, as calculated by the State Treasurer pursuant to  
5 section 599c of this title, from ~~the emission of covered greenhouse gases~~  
6 ~~during the covered period~~ gas emissions as the responsible party's applicable  
7 share of covered greenhouse gas emissions bears to the aggregate applicable  
8 shares of covered greenhouse gas emissions ~~resulting from the use of fossil~~  
9 ~~fuels extracted or refined during the covered period.~~

10 Sec. 24. 10 V.S.A. § 599c is amended to read:

11 § 599c. STATE TREASURER REPORT ON THE COST TO VERMONT OF  
12 COVERED GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

13 On or before January 15, ~~2026~~ 2027, the State Treasurer, after consultation  
14 with the Interagency Advisory Board to the Climate Action Office, and with  
15 any other person or entity whom the State Treasurer decides to consult for the  
16 purpose of obtaining and utilizing credible data or methodologies that the State  
17 Treasurer determines may aid the State Treasurer in making the assessments  
18 and estimates required by this section, shall submit to the Senate Committees  
19 on Appropriations, on Finance, on Agriculture, and on Natural Resources and  
20 Energy and the House Committees on Appropriations; on Ways and Means; on  
21 Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry; and on Environment ~~and Energy~~

1 an assessment of the cost to the State of Vermont and its residents ~~of the~~  
2 ~~emission~~ of covered greenhouse gases ~~for the period that began on January 1,~~  
3 ~~1995 and ended on December 31, 2024~~ gas emissions. The assessment shall  
4 include:

5 \* \* \*

6 (3) a categorized calculation of the costs that have been incurred and are  
7 projected to be incurred in the future within the State of Vermont to abate the  
8 effects of covered greenhouse gas emissions ~~from between January 1, 1995~~  
9 ~~and December 31, 2024~~ on the State of Vermont and its residents.

10 Sec. 25. EFFECTIVE DATES

11 (a) This section and Secs. 20–24 (climate superfund act) shall take effect  
12 on passage.

13 (b) All other sections shall take effect on July 1, 2025, except that:

14 (1) Sec. 7 (free fishing license; person with developmental disabilities)  
15 shall take effect on January 1, 2026; and

16 (2) in Sec. 13, 10 V.S.A. § 4085(a) (related to the taking of reptiles and  
17 amphibians) shall take effect on January 1, 2027.