

1 H.718

2 Introduced by Representative Campbell of St. Johnsbury

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

5 Subject: Public service; building energy; contractors; contractor registry;

6 building energy standards; Residential Building Energy Standards;

7 Commercial Building Energy Standards

8 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to direct the
9 Division of Fire Safety to adopt a residential building code, establish a task
10 force on improving the contractor registry, require contractors to disclose their
11 criminal record, update the energy education requirements for regulated
12 professionals, and grant municipalities the authority to administer and enforce
13 the Residential Building Energy Standards and the Commercial Building
14 Energy Standards.

15 An act relating to building energy efficiency

16 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

17 ~~*** Findings ***~~

18 Sec. 1. FINDINGS

19 ~~The General Assembly finds that:~~

1 (1) Recommendations by stakeholders and building efficiency experts in
2 the 2023 Building Energy Code Study Committee and the 2024 and 2025
3 Building Energy Code Working Group consistently find that Vermont's
4 mandatory energy codes, the Residential Building Energy Standards (RBES)
5 and the Commercial Building Energy Standards (CBES), are a subset of
6 building construction codes and should eventually be administered by the
7 Division of Fire Safety, which administers all other building codes.

8 (2) Vermont has not adopted a residential building construction code,
9 which means there is no administrative infrastructure or enforcement
10 mechanism for implementing energy codes consistently and effectively. Lack
11 of a residential building code also means Vermont lacks a standard-of-care
12 reference for the public, builders, designers, insurance companies, or the
13 courts, and such lack also may limit the State's ability to access certain federal
14 funding.

15 (3) Lack of consistent and effective implementation and enforcement of
16 the RBES in particular has resulted in low compliance rates, according to
17 studies by the Department of Public Service.

18 (4) Recommendations of the 2024 and 2025 Working Group include
19 leveraging the Office of Professional Regulation's (OPR's) residential
20 contractor registry to provide market incentives to contractors to register and

1 ~~obtain voluntary certifications, including in energy codes. However, the~~
2 ~~registry has not so far proved effective for the public, contractors, or OPR.~~

3 ~~(5) OPR does not have adequate resources to make substantial~~
4 ~~improvements to the registry. The 2025 Working Group recommended~~
5 ~~convening a Task Force and appropriating funding to assist OPR.~~

6 ~~(6) While the RBESs do apply to single-family residences, the~~
7 ~~Department of Public Service has advised the General Assembly that enabling~~
8 ~~legislation does not provide clear authority for municipalities to administer and~~
9 ~~enforce the RBES at the local level. Some municipalities do wish to have that~~
10 ~~authority.~~

11 * * * Residential Building Code * * *

12 Sec. 2. ADOPTION OF RESIDENTIAL BUILDING CODE;

13 APPROPRIATION; POSITION

14 ~~(a) The Division of Fire Safety shall adopt a residential building code to~~
15 ~~take effect on January 1, 2028. The residential building code shall be based on~~
16 ~~the International Residential Code.~~

17 ~~(b) The establishment of one permanent, exempt full-time residential~~
18 ~~building code administrator in the Division of Fire Safety is authorized for~~
19 ~~fiscal year 2027.~~

1 ~~Sec. 3. GRANT FUNDING FOR DEVELOPMENT OF RESIDENTIAL~~

2 BUILDING CODE

3 The Commissioner of Public Safety shall seek grant funding to facilitate the
4 development and adoption of a residential building code pursuant to Sec. 2 of
5 this act. The Commissioner shall seek funding from both federal and private
6 grant programs.

7 * * * Task Force * * *

8 Sec. 4. RESIDENTIAL CONTRACTOR REGULATION TASK FORCE;

9 REPORTS

10 (a) Creation. There is created the Residential Contractor Regulation Task
11 Force to improve the existing residential contractor registry and expedite the
12 creation of certain voluntary certifications. The Task Force shall act in an
13 advisory capacity to Office of Professional Regulation.

14 (b) Membership. The Task Force shall be composed of the following
15 members:

16 (1) one member appointed by the Secretary of State;

17 (2) one member appointed by the Commissioner of Public Safety;

18 (3) one member appointed by the Vermont Builders and Remodelers

19 Association;

20 (4) one member appointed by the American Institute of Architects

21 Vermont,

- 1 ~~(5) one member appointed by the Secretary of Education;~~
- 2 ~~(6) one member appointed by the Chancellor of the Vermont State~~
- 3 ~~College System;~~
- 4 ~~(7) one member appointed by Vermont Works for Women;~~
- 5 ~~(8) one member appointed by ReSOURCE;~~
- 6 ~~(9) one member appointed by Efficiency Vermont;~~
- 7 ~~(10) one member appointed by the Commissioner of Public Service; and~~
- 8 ~~(11) one member appointed by the Secretary of Natural Resources.~~
- 9 (c) Powers and duties. The Task Force shall:
- 10 (1) address shortcomings in the existing residential contractor registry,
- 11 including:
- 12 (A) improving public-facing web presence;
- 13 (B) identifying cost-efficient marketing strategies to the public and
- 14 residential contractors;
- 15 (C) identifying and creating lists of trade specialties; and
- 16 (D) clarifying the relationship between business-based registrations
- 17 and individual-based certifications;
- 18 (2) expedite the creation of voluntary certifications, including
- 19 identifying, vetting and recommending credentialing entities, with initial
- 20 ~~certifications in the following or similar subject areas.~~

1 (A) construction site supervisor;

2 (B) basic energy code, both residential and commercial; and

3 (C) high-performance building; and

4 (3) assess whether the regulating entity for residential building
5 contractors should be transferred from the Office of Professional Regulation to
6 the Division of Fire Safety.

7 (d) Assistance.

8 (1) The Task Force shall have the administrative, technical, and legal
9 assistance of the Office of Professional Regulation.

10 (2) The Division of Fire Safety and Department of Public Services shall
11 provide informational assistance and technical expertise to the Task Force
12 regarding issues related to building codes and energy performance.

13 (e) Reports. The Task Force will submit annual reports on or before
14 November 1 beginning in 2026 to the Office of Professional Regulation, the
15 House Committees on Energy and Digital Infrastructure and on General and
16 Housing, and the Senate Committees on Economic Development, Housing and
17 General Affairs and on Natural Resources and Energy with its findings and
18 any recommendations for legislative action.

1 (f) Meetings.

2 (1) The Secretary of State, or designee, shall call the first meeting of the
3 Task Force to occur on or before August 1, 2026, and the Task Force shall then
4 meet at least monthly through July 2027 and then thereafter at least bimonthly.

5 (2) The Task Force shall select a chair from among its members at the
6 first meeting.

7 (3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

8 (4) The Task Force shall cease to exist on June 30, 2029.

9 (g) Compensation and reimbursement.

10 (1) Members of the Task Force who are not otherwise compensated by
11 their employer for attendance at meetings shall be entitled to per diem
12 compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A.
13 § 1010.

14 (2) Payments to members of the Task Force authorized under this
15 subsection shall be made from monies appropriated to the Office of
16 Professional Regulation.

17 (i) Appropriation. The sum of \$5,500.00 is appropriated to the Office of
18 Professional Regulation from the General Fund in fiscal year 2026 for per
19 diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses for members of the Task
20 Force.

1 *** Contractor Disclosure ***

2 Sec. 5. 26 VSA § 5509 is amended to read:

3 § 5509. REQUIREMENTS OF REGISTRANTS

4 * * *

5 (d) Adverse background. A person registered under this chapter shall,
6 prior to executing a contract pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, provide
7 a client with a written disclosure of any prior criminal convictions, adverse
8 civil judgments, and violations pursuant to section 5510 of this title.

9 * * * Energy Education * * *

10 Sec. 6. 3 V.S.A. § 138 is amended to read:

11 § 138. REQUIRED EDUCATION FOR SPECIFIED LICENSEES; STATE
12 ENERGY GOALS

13 * * *

14 (b) The Office shall require each of the licensee described in subsection
15 (a) of this section to complete an education module regarding the State's
16 energy goals and how each licensee's specific profession can further those
17 goals.

18 (1) The education module ~~shall be not more than two hours and shall be~~
19 ~~required as a condition of initial licensure and each license renewal. The~~
20 ~~module shall explain how the work of the profession or trade intersects with~~
21 ~~the energy codes and affects the energy, air flow, and moisture management~~

1 ~~dynamics of the building as an integrated system and include education on any~~
2 State or utility incentives relevant to the profession.

3 ~~(A) The education module for initial licensure shall provide general~~
4 ~~information regarding the State's energy goals.~~

5 ~~(B) The education module for license renewal shall provide any~~
6 ~~updates on the State's energy goals and any updates regarding corresponding~~
7 ~~State energy programs applicable to the profession.~~

8 * * *

9 Sec. 7. 20 V.S.A. § 2731 is amended to read:

10 § 2731. RULES; INSPECTIONS; VARIANCES

11 (a) Rules.

12 (1) The Commissioner is authorized to adopt rules regarding the
13 construction of buildings, maintenance and operation of premises, and
14 prevention of fires and removal of fire hazards, and to prescribe standards
15 necessary to protect the public, employees, and property against harm arising
16 out of or likely to arise out of fire.

17 (2)(A) The Commissioner shall require each of the following
18 certifiants
19 to complete an education module regarding the State's energy goals and how
20 each certificant's specific profession can further those goals:

21

1 ~~(P) The education module shall be not more than two hours and shall~~
2 be required as a condition of initial certification and certification renewal. The
3 module shall explain how the work of the profession or trade intersects with
4 the energy codes and affects the energy, air flow, and moisture management
5 dynamics of the building as an integrated system and include education on any
6 State or utility incentives relevant to the profession.

7 ~~(i) The education module for initial certification shall provide~~
8 ~~general information regarding the State's energy goals.~~

9 ~~(ii) The education module for certification renewal shall provide~~
10 ~~any updates on the State's energy goals and any updates regarding~~
11 ~~corresponding State energy programs applicable to the profession.~~

12 Sec. 8. 20 V.S.A. § 2884 is amended to read:

13 § 2884. QUALIFICATIONS OF INSPECTORS

14 * * *

15 (b) Education. The Commissioner shall require each boiler inspector to
16 complete an education module regarding the State's energy goals and how the
17 boiler inspection profession can further those goals.

18 (1) The education module shall be ~~not more than two hours and shall be~~
19 required as a condition of initial authorization and authorization renewal. The
20 module shall explain how the work of the profession or trade intersects with
21 the energy codes and affects the energy, air flow, and moisture management

1 ~~dynamics of the building as an integrated system and include education on any~~

2 State or utility incentives relevant to the profession.

3 ~~(A) The education module for initial authorization shall provide~~
4 ~~general information regarding the State's energy goals.~~

5 ~~(B) The education module for authorization renewal shall provide any~~
6 ~~updates on the State's energy goals and any updates regarding corresponding~~
7 ~~State energy programs applicable to the profession.~~

8 * * *

9 Sec. 9. 26 V.S.A. § 905 is amended to read:

10 § 905. APPLICATION; EXAMINATIONS, EDUCATION, AND FEES

11 * *

12 (g) Pursuant to qualifications and procedures determined by the
13 Commissioner, the Board shall, upon request, waive application fees for
14 qualified military members and military spouses.

15 (1) The education module shall be ~~not more than two hours and shall be~~
16 ~~required as a condition of initial licensure and license renewal. The module~~
17 ~~shall explain how the work of the profession or trade intersects with the energy~~
18 ~~codes and affects the energy, air flow, and moisture management dynamics of~~
19 ~~the building as an integrated system and include education on any State or~~
20 ~~utility incentives relevant to the profession.~~

1 ~~(A) The education module for initial licensure shall provide general~~
2 ~~information regarding the State's energy goals.~~

3 ~~(B) The education module for license renewal shall provide any~~
4 ~~updates on the State's energy goals and any updates regarding corresponding~~
5 ~~State energy programs applicable to the profession.~~

6 * * *

7 Sec. 10. 26 V.S.A. § 2193 is amended to read:

8 § 2193. APPLICATIONS; EXAMINATIONS, EDUCATION, AND

9 FEES

10 * * *

11 (f) In addition to other education requirements of this subchapter, the
12 Commissioner shall require each applicant to complete an education module
13 regarding the State's energy goals and how the plumbing profession can
14 further those goals.

15 (1) The education module shall be ~~not more than two hours and shall be~~
16 ~~required as a condition of initial licensure and license renewal, except that~~
17 ~~master and journeyman plumbers who complete this education module shall~~
18 ~~not be required to complete this education module for any additional specialty~~
19 ~~license. The module shall explain how the work of the profession or trade~~
20 ~~intersects with the energy codes and affects the energy, air flow, and moisture~~

1 ~~management dynamics of the building as an integrated system and include~~

2 education on any State or utility incentives relevant to the profession.

3 ~~(A) The education module for initial licensure shall provide general~~
4 ~~information regarding the State's energy goals.~~

5 ~~(B) The education module for license renewal shall provide any~~
6 ~~updates on the State's energy goals and any updates regarding corresponding~~
7 ~~State energy programs applicable to the profession.~~

8 * * *

9 Sec. 11. ENERGY PROFESSIONALS REGULATION REPORT

10 The Office of Professional Regulation shall conduct a sunrise process to
11 assess whether Home Energy Rating Systems raters and energy professionals
12 should be professions regulated by the Office. The Office shall also assess
13 whether the regulation of residential building contractors should be transferred
14 from registration to certification or licensure. On or before July 1, 2027, the
15 Office shall submit a report with its recommendations to the House
16 Committees on Energy and Digital Infrastructure and on Government
17 Operations and Military Affairs and the Senate Committees on Economic
18 Development, Housing, and General Affairs and on Natural Resources and
19 Energy.

1 *** Energy Code Enforcement ***

2 Sec. 12. 30 V.S.A. § 51 is amended to read:

3 § 51. RESIDENTIAL BUILDING ENERGY STANDARDS; STRETCH
4 CODE

5 * * *

6 (j) Municipal enforcement. A municipality may administer and enforce the
7 RBES within the municipality in compliance with this section.

8 Sec. 13. 30 V.S.A. § 53 is amended to read:

9 § 53. COMMERCIAL BUILDING ENERGY STANDARDS

10 * * *

11 (h) Municipal enforcement. A municipality may administer and enforce
12 the CBES within the municipality in compliance with this section.

13 * * * Appropriations * * *

14 Sec. 14. APPROPRIATIONS

15 (a) In fiscal year 2027, the sum of \$200,000.00 is appropriated from the
16 Fuel Efficiency Fund to the Department of Public Service for the purpose of
17 funding, as part of the energy efficiency utilities' 2027–2029 Demand
18 Resource Plans, consultation and technical support to municipalities that elect
19 to adopt and enforce the Residential Building Energy Standards and the
20 Commercial Building Energy Standards.

1 ~~(b) In fiscal year 2027, the sum of \$200,000.00 is appropriated from the~~
2 Fuel Efficiency Fund to the Office of Professional Regulation for the purpose
3 of launching, by December 31, 2027, a consumer-oriented website and a
4 comprehensive marketing plan to raise public and contractor awareness of the
5 residential contractor registry.

6 * * * Effective Date * * *

7 Sec. 15. EFFECTIVE DATE

8 ~~This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.~~

* * * Findings * * *

Sec. 1. FINDINGS

The General Assembly finds that:

(1) Public policy for several years has implemented strategies to stimulate construction to relieve Vermont's severe housing shortage. These actions are gaining momentum without appropriate construction standards for one- and two-unit dwellings and with uneven application of energy efficiency standards.

(2) Recommendations by stakeholders and building efficiency experts in the 2023 Building Energy Code Study Committee and the 2024 and 2025 Building Energy Code Working Group consistently find that Vermont's mandatory energy codes, the Residential Building Energy Standards (RBES) and the Commercial Building Energy Standards (CBES), are a subset of

building construction codes and should eventually be administered by the Division of Fire Safety, which administers all other building codes.

(3) Vermont has not adopted a residential building construction code applicable to one- and two-unit dwellings, which means that for these buildings there is no administrative infrastructure or enforcement mechanism for implementing energy codes consistently and effectively. Lack of a residential building code also means Vermont lacks a standard-of-care reference for the public, builders, designers, insurance companies, or the courts, and such lack also may limit the State's ability to access certain federal funding.

(4) Lack of consistent and effective implementation and enforcement of the RBES in particular has resulted in low compliance rates, according to studies by the Department of Public Service.

(5) Recommendations of the 2024 and 2025 Working Group include leveraging the Office of Professional Regulation's (OPR's) residential contractor registry to provide market incentives to contractors to register and obtain voluntary certifications, including in energy codes. However, the registry has not so far proved effective for the public, contractors, or OPR.

(6) OPR does not have adequate resources to make substantial improvements to the registry. The 2025 Working Group recommended convening a Task Force and appropriating funding to assist OPR.

(7) While the RBESs do apply to single-family residences, the Department of Public Service has advised the General Assembly that enabling legislation does not provide clear authority for municipalities to administer and enforce the RBES at the local level. Some municipalities do wish to have that authority.

** * * Residential Building Code * * **

Sec. 2. ADOPTION OF RESIDENTIAL BUILDING CODE

On or before January 15, 2027, the Director of Fire Safety shall complete an assessment on whether and how the State should adopt a residential building code. The Director shall submit the report with the recommendation to the House Committees on Energy and Digital Infrastructure and on General and Housing and the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs.

** * * Task Force * * **

Sec. 3. RESIDENTIAL CONTRACTOR REGISTRY TASK FORCE;

REPORTS

(a) Creation. There is created the Residential Contractor Registry Task Force to improve the existing residential contractor registry and expedite the creation of certain voluntary certifications. The Task Force shall act in an advisory capacity to Office of Professional Regulation (OPR).

(b) Membership. The Task Force shall be composed of the following members:

(1) one member appointed by the Secretary of State;

(2) one member appointed by the Commissioner of Public Safety;

(3) one member appointed by the Vermont Builders and Remodelers Association;

(4) one member appointed by the American Institute of Architects Vermont;

(5) one member appointed by the Secretary of Education;

(6) one member appointed by the Chancellor of the Vermont State Colleges System;

(7) one member from the Office of Economic Opportunity's Weatherization Assistance Program;

(8) one member from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns;

(9) one member appointed by Efficiency Vermont;

(10) one member appointed by the Commissioner of Public Service;

(11) one member from the Vermont Attorney General's office;

(12) one member from Associated Builders and Contractors of New Hampshire and Vermont;

(13) one member from Associated General Contractors of Vermont;

(14) one residential contractor not affiliated with Associated Builders and Contractors of New Hampshire and Vermont or Associated General Contractors of Vermont, appointed by the Governor; and

(15) one member of the public appointed by the Governor.

(c) Powers and duties. The Task Force shall advise OPR on ways to:

(1) address shortcomings in the existing residential contractor registry, including:

(A) improving public-facing web presence;

(B) identifying cost-efficient outreach strategies to the public and residential contractors;

(C) identifying and creating lists of trade specialties; and

(D) clarifying the relationship between business-based registrations and individual-based certifications;

(2) expedite the creation of voluntary certifications, including identifying, vetting and recommending credentialing entities, with initial certifications in the following or similar subject areas:

(A) construction site supervisor;

(B) basic energy code, both residential and commercial; and

(C) high-performance building;

(3) assess how to improve the energy education modules required under 3 V.S.A. § 138 and whether they should be administered by the Department of Public Service;

(4) assess whether the type of regulation for residential contractors should be changed from registration to certification or licensure;

(5) assess whether and how the regulating entity for residential building contractors should be transferred from the Office of Professional Regulation to the Division of Fire Safety; and

(6) consider any other strategies to improve and streamline the regulation of the residential construction industry.

(d) Assistance.

(1) The Task Force shall have the administrative, technical, and legal assistance of the Office of Professional Regulation.

(2) The Division of Fire Safety and Department of Public Service shall provide informational assistance and technical expertise to the Task Force regarding issues related to building codes and energy performance.

(e) Reports. Beginning in 2026, the Task Force shall submit annual reports on or before November 1 to the Office of Professional Regulation, the House Committees on Energy and Digital Infrastructure and on General and Housing, and the Senate Committees on Economic Development, Housing and

General Affairs and on Natural Resources and Energy with its findings and any recommendations for legislative action.

(f) Meetings.

(1) The member appointed by the Secretary of State shall call the first meeting of the Task Force to occur on or before August 1, 2026, and the Task Force shall then meet at least monthly through July 2027 and then thereafter at least every other month.

(2) The Task Force shall select a chair from among its members at the first meeting.

(3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

(4) The Task Force shall cease to exist on June 30, 2029.

(g) Compensation and reimbursement.

(1) Members of the Task Force who are not otherwise compensated by their employer for attendance at meetings shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010.

(2) Payments to members of the Task Force authorized under this subsection shall be made from monies appropriated to the Office of Professional Regulation.

** * * Energy Education * * **

** * * Architects, Engineers, and Property Inspectors * * **

Sec. 4. 3 V.S.A. § 138 is amended to read:

*§ 138. REQUIRED EDUCATION FOR SPECIFIED LICENSEES; STATE
ENERGY GOALS*

** * **

(b) The Office shall require each of the licensees described in subsection (a) of this section to complete an education module regarding the State's energy goals and how each licensee's specific profession can further those goals.

(1) ~~The education module shall be not more than two hours and shall be required as a condition of initial licensure and each license renewal. The module shall explain how the work of the profession or trade intersects with the energy codes and affects the energy, air flow, and moisture management dynamics of the building as an integrated system and include education on any State or utility incentives relevant to the profession.~~

~~(A) The education module for initial licensure shall provide general information regarding the State's energy goals.~~

~~(B) The education module for license renewal shall provide any updates on the State's energy goals and any updates regarding corresponding State energy programs applicable to the profession.~~

(2) The Office shall consider any recommendations on these education modules provided by relevant stakeholders and approve education modules in consultation with the Agency of Natural Resources and the Department of Public Service for all the licensees set forth in subsection (a) of this section and in consultation with the Department of Taxes for real estate appraisers and real estate brokers and sales persons. Beginning January 1, 2028, and every 3 years thereafter, the Office shall review these education modules, consider recommendations by relevant stakeholders, and update the modules as necessary.

** * * Heating Equipment Technicians * * **

Sec. 5. 20 V.S.A. § 2731 is amended to read:

§ 2731. RULES; INSPECTIONS; VARIANCES

(a) Rules.

(1) The Commissioner is authorized to adopt rules regarding the construction of buildings, maintenance and operation of premises, and prevention of fires and removal of fire hazards, and to prescribe standards necessary to protect the public, employees, and property against harm arising out of or likely to arise out of fire.

(2)(A) The Commissioner shall require each of the following certificants to complete an education module regarding the State's energy goals and how each certificant's specific profession can further those goals:

* * *

(B) The education module shall be not more than two hours and shall be required as a condition of initial certification and certification renewal. The module shall explain how the work of the profession or trade intersects with the energy codes and affects the energy, air flow, and moisture management dynamics of the building as an integrated system and include education on any State or utility incentives relevant to the profession.

~~(i) The education module for initial certification shall provide general information regarding the State's energy goals.~~

~~(ii) The education module for certification renewal shall provide any updates on the State's energy goals and any updates regarding corresponding State energy programs applicable to the profession.~~

(C) The Commissioner shall consider any recommendations on these education modules provided by relevant stakeholders and approve education modules in consultation with the Agency of Natural Resources and the Department of Public Service. Beginning January 1, 2028, and every 3 years thereafter, the Commissioner shall review these education modules, consider recommendations by relevant stakeholders, and update the modules as necessary.

* * *

** * * Commissioned Boiler Inspectors * * **

Sec. 6. 20 V.S.A. § 2884 is amended to read:

§ 2884. QUALIFICATIONS OF INSPECTORS

** * **

(b) Education.—The Commissioner shall require each boiler inspector to complete an education module regarding the State’s energy goals and how the boiler inspection profession can further those goals.

(1) The education module shall be not more than two hours and shall be required as a condition of initial authorization and authorization renewal. The module shall include education on any State or utility incentives relevant to the profession.

(A) The education module for initial authorization shall provide general information regarding the State’s energy goals.

(B) The education module for authorization renewal shall provide any updates on the State’s energy goals and any updates regarding corresponding State energy programs applicable to the profession.

(2) The Commissioner shall consider any recommendations on these education modules provided by relevant stakeholders and approve education modules in consultation with the Agency of Natural Resources and the Department of Public Service. [Repealed.]

** * **

** * * Electricians * * **

Sec. 7. 26 V.S.A. § 905 is amended to read:

§ 905. APPLICATION; EXAMINATIONS, EDUCATION, AND FEES

** * **

(g) Pursuant to qualifications and procedures determined by the Commissioner, the Board shall, upon request, waive application fees for qualified military members and military spouses.

(1) The education module shall be not more than two hours and shall be required as a condition of initial licensure and license renewal. The module shall explain how the work of the profession or trade intersects with the energy codes and affects the energy, air flow, and moisture management dynamics of the building as an integrated system and include education on any State or utility incentives relevant to the profession.

~~(A) The education module for initial licensure shall provide general information regarding the State's energy goals.~~

~~(B) The education module for license renewal shall provide any updates on the State's energy goals and any updates regarding corresponding State energy programs applicable to the profession.~~

(2) The Commissioner shall consider any recommendations on these education modules provided by relevant stakeholders and approve education modules in consultation with the Agency of Natural Resources and the

Department of Public Service. Beginning January 1, 2028, and every 3 years thereafter, the Commissioner shall review these education modules, consider recommendations by relevant stakeholders, and update the modules as necessary.

* * *

* * * *Plumbers* * * *

Sec. 8. 26 V.S.A. § 2193 is amended to read:

§ 2193. APPLICATIONS; EXAMINATIONS, EDUCATION, AND

FEES

* * *

(f) In addition to other education requirements of this subchapter, the Commissioner shall require each applicant to complete an education module regarding the State's energy goals and how the plumbing profession can further those goals.

(1) The education module shall be not more than two hours and shall be required as a condition of initial licensure and license renewal, except that master and journeyman plumbers who complete this education module shall not be required to complete this education module for any additional specialty license. The module shall explain how the work of the profession or trade intersects with the energy codes and affects the energy, air flow, and moisture

~~management dynamics of the building as an integrated system and include education on any State or utility incentives relevant to the profession.~~

~~(A) The education module for initial licensure shall provide general information regarding the State's energy goals.~~

~~(B) The education module for license renewal shall provide any updates on the State's energy goals and any updates regarding corresponding State energy programs applicable to the profession.~~

~~(2) The Commissioner shall consider any recommendations on these education modules provided by relevant stakeholders and approve education modules in consultation with the Agency of Natural Resources and the Department of Public Service. Beginning January 1, 2028, and every 3 years thereafter, the Commissioner shall review these education modules, consider recommendations by relevant stakeholders, and update the modules as necessary.~~

~~Sec. 9. ENERGY PROFESSIONALS REGULATION REPORT~~

~~The Office of Professional Regulation shall conduct a sunrise process to assess whether Home Energy Rating Systems raters and energy professionals should be regulated professions. On or before November 1, 2028, the Office shall submit a report with its recommendations to the House Committees on Energy and Digital Infrastructure and on Government Operations and Military~~

Affairs and the Senate Committees on Economic Development, Housing, and
General Affairs and on Natural Resources and Energy.

** * * Energy Code Enforcement * * **

Sec. 10. 30 V.S.A. § 51 is amended to read:

*§ 51. RESIDENTIAL BUILDING ENERGY STANDARDS; STRETCH
CODE*

** * **

*(j) Municipal enforcement. A municipality may enforce the RBES within
the municipality in compliance with this section.*

(k) Transitional safe harbor compliance.

*(1) This subsection applies to any residential building for which a
certificate of compliance with the Residential Building Energy Standards was
filed pursuant to this section using the 2020 RBES compliance path during the
period beginning on September 17, 2025, the effective date of Executive Order
No. 06-25 of 2025, and until such time as amendments to the RBES rules are
adopted.*

*(2) A building described in subdivision (1) of this subsection shall be
deemed to be in compliance with this section. The use of the 2020 RBES
compliance path during that period shall not, by itself, constitute a violation of
this section or of any rule adopted under this section.*

(3) The State shall not bring an enforcement action under this section based solely on the use of the 2020 RBES compliance path for a building described in subdivision (1) of this subsection, and no damages, penalties, or other relief shall be awarded in an action brought under subsection (g) of this section based solely on such use.

Sec. 11. 30 V.S.A. § 53 is amended to read:

§ 53. COMMERCIAL BUILDING ENERGY STANDARDS

* * *

(h) Municipal enforcement. A municipality may enforce the CBES within the municipality in compliance with this section.

(i) Transitional safe harbor compliance.

(1) This subsection applies to any commercial building for which the builder or owner complied with the version of the 2020 Commercial Building Energy Standards as referenced in Executive Order No. 06-25 of 2025 during the period beginning on September 17, 2025, the effective date of the Executive Order; and until such time as amendments to the CBES rules are adopted.

(2) A building described in subdivision (1) of this subsection shall be deemed to be in compliance with this section. The use of the 2020 version of the CBES during that period shall not, by itself, constitute a violation of this section or of any rule adopted under this section.

(3) The State shall not bring an enforcement action under this section based solely on the use of the 2020 version of the CBES for a building described in subdivision (1) of this subsection.

Sec. 12. 24 V.S.A. § 3101 is amended to read:

§ 3101. *BYLAWS AND ORDINANCES; PENALTIES*

(a) *The mayor and board of aldermen of a city, the selectboard of a town, or the trustees of an incorporated village, may, in accordance with this chapter, establish codes and regulations for the construction, maintenance, repair, and alteration of buildings and other structures within the municipality. Such codes and regulations may include provisions relating to building materials, structural design, passageways, stairways and exits, heating systems, fire protection procedures, and such other matters as may be reasonably necessary for the health, safety, and welfare of the public, but excluding electrical installations subject to regulation under 26 V.S.A. chapter 15. The adopted codes and regulations may incorporate by reference the Residential Building Energy Standards and the Commercial Building Energy Standards established pursuant to 30 V.S.A. chapter 2.*

(b) *Any code or regulation under subsection (a) of this section shall be adopted, amended, or repealed and enforced pursuant to the provisions of chapter 59 of this title.*

(c) When any municipality adopts or amends a building code, it shall impose requirements consistent with the current rules and standards adopted by the Commissioner of Public Safety under 20 V.S.A. chapter 173, subchapter 2.

** * **

(g) Incorporation of the Residential Building Energy Standards and the Commercial Building Energy Standards pursuant to subsection (a) of this section shall allow the municipality to enforce those standards.

** * * Appropriations * * **

Sec. 13. APPROPRIATIONS

Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary:

(1) In fiscal year 2027, the sum of \$200,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public Service for the purpose of funding, as part of the energy efficiency utilities' 2027–2029 Demand Resource Plans, consultation and technical support to municipalities that elect to adopt and enforce the Residential Building Energy Standards and the Commercial Building Energy Standards.

(2) In fiscal year 2027, the sum of \$200,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Office of Professional Regulation to support the Residential Contractor Registry Task Force established in Sec. 3 of this act with the goal of identifying a consumer-oriented agency or organization to

~~least a website to raise public awareness of the residential contractor registry
providing funding to that agency or organization to launch and manage the
website on or before December 31, 2027 and supporting the Office of
Professional Regulation in the development of voluntary certifications.~~

Sec. 13. CONTINGENCY OF FUNDING

The duty to implement the Residential Contractor Registry Task Force
described in Sec. 3 of this act is contingent upon an appropriation of funds in
fiscal year 2027 from the General Fund to the Office of Professional
Regulation for that purpose.

** * * Effective Date * * **

Sec. 14. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.