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S.219

An act relating to an energy navigator program report

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

Sec. 1. ENERGY NAVIGATOR PROGRAM; REPORT

(a) The Department of Public Service shall contract with a third-party consultant to design a Vermont community-based home energy navigator and coaching program, in collaboration with the Climate Action Center of Addison County and other existing community-based energy navigator programs in Vermont, that will provide in-person and remote energy coaching services to residential consumers in communities statewide. The Department’s consultant shall build on findings from the Department’s comprehensive process and performance evaluation of more than 100 publicly funded energy programs focused on affordability, including electric and thermal efficiency, weatherization for customers with low income, and beneficial electrification initiatives to inform the design of a Vermont community-based home energy navigator and coaching program. The Department’s consultant shall consult with Efficiency Vermont, the Vermont State Energy Office, the Vermont Climate Action Office, Vermont’s community action agencies, the Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network, Vermont’s electric utilities, community-based home energy navigator and coaching programs, and other states, including Connecticut and Massachusetts, that have experience with

1 community-based energy programs. For the purposes of this section,
2 “residential consumers” includes homeowners, landlords, and renters.

3 (b) The program shall:

4 (1) provide guidance to residential consumers, particularly those with
5 low and moderate incomes, to better understand and navigate energy efficiency
6 and clean energy investment options to affordably meet their home energy
7 needs;

8 (2) advise residential consumers on accessing available grants, rebates,
9 financing, and other assistance programs and incentives to meet their home
10 energy needs;

11 (3) assist residential consumers in prioritizing identified energy-saving
12 opportunities, including through the integration of weatherization strategies to
13 reduce heating and cooling loads that could minimize the need for the
14 installation of new equipment and lower future electric demands on the grid;

15 (4) help residential consumers connect to local contractors and review
16 and analyze contractor recommendations regarding cost, payment, and other
17 relevant factors;

18 (5) advise residential consumers in person, as necessary, and over time,
19 recognizing that hands-on coaching help may be needed at a consumer’s home
20 and over several years;

1 (6) provide recommendations for how the program would provide
2 ongoing funding to support the operations of community-based energy
3 coaching programs; and

4 (7) recommend any grant funds and private partnerships that may be
5 available to support program implementation.

6 (c) On or before March 1, 2027, the Department shall submit a report on
7 the program design to the House Committee on Energy and Digital
8 Infrastructure and the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy.

9 The report shall include a description of the design of the program, which
10 could include the creation of a pilot program or expansion and support of
11 existing community-based programs, a description of the technical assistance
12 and educational materials to be developed as part of the program, an estimate
13 of program costs, funding sources to provide ongoing support to community-
14 based energy coaching programs, a target number of residential consumers to
15 be served by the program, energy and emissions savings that will result from
16 the program, and a proposed timeline for the implementation of the program.

17 Sec. 2. CONTIGENCY OF FUNDING

18 The duty to hire a consultant as described in Sec. 1 of this act (energy
19 navigator program; report) is contingent upon an appropriation of funds in
20 fiscal year 2027 from the General Fund to the Department of Public Service for
21 that. The duty of the Department of Public Service to grant funding to the

1 Climate Economy Action Center is contingent upon an appropriation of funds
2 in fiscal year 2027 from the General Fund to the Department of Public Service
3 for that.

4 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

5 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.