

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry to which was
3 referred House Bill No. 537 entitled “An act relating to “ respectfully reports
4 that it has considered the same and recommends that the bill be amended by
5 striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the
6 following:

7 **Sec. 1. 27A V.S.A. § 1-204 is amended to read:**

8 **§ 1-204. PREEXISTING COMMON INTEREST COMMUNITIES**

9 (a)(1) Unless excepted under section 1-203 of this title, the following
10 sections and subdivisions of this title apply to a common interest community
11 created in this State before January 1, 1999: sections 1-103, 1-105, 1-106, 1-
12 107, 2-103, 2-104, and 2-121; subdivisions 3-102(a)(1) through (6) and (11)
13 through (16); and sections 3-111, 3-116, 3-118, 4-109, and 4-117 to the extent
14 necessary to construe the applicable sections. The sections and subdivisions
15 described in this subdivision apply only to events and circumstances occurring
16 after December 31, 1998, and do not invalidate existing provisions of the
17 declarations, bylaws, plats, or plans of those common interest communities.

18 * * *

19 (3) Unless excepted under section 1-203 of this title, section 3-125 of
20 this title shall apply to a common interest community created in this State
21 before January 1, 1999. Section 3-125 applies only to events and

1 circumstances occurring after June 30, 2026, and does not invalidate existing
2 provisions of the declarations, bylaws, plats, or plans of those common interest
3 communities.

4 * * *

5 Sec. 2. 27A V.S.A. § 3-125 is added to read:

6 § 3-125. VEGETABLE GARDENS

7 (a) As used in this section, “vegetable garden” means a plot of land where a
8 person cultivates plants for personal consumption or donation and the land and
9 activities on it are not subject to the required agricultural practices. A
10 “vegetable garden” does not include cultivation of cannabis or any unlawful
11 crops or substances.

12 (b)(1) Any covenant, restriction, or condition contained in any deed,
13 contract, security instrument, or other instrument affecting the transfer or sale
14 of any interest in a common interest community, and any provision of a
15 governing document associated with a common interest community, such as a
16 declaration, bylaw, or rule, that either effectively prohibits or unreasonably
17 restricts the installation or use of a vegetable garden in areas designated for
18 exclusive use of the unit owner or is in conflict with this section is void and
19 unenforceable.

20 (2) If approval is required for the installation of a vegetable garden, the
21 application for approval shall be processed and approved by the association in

1 the same manner as an application for approval of an architectural modification
2 to the common interest community and shall not be intentionally avoided or
3 delayed. The approval or denial of an application shall be in writing. If an
4 application is not denied in writing within 90 days from the date of receipt of
5 the application, the application shall be deemed approved, unless that delay is
6 the result of a reasonable request for additional information.

7 (3) The unit owner and each successive owner shall be responsible for
8 all of the following:

9 (A) costs for the installation, maintenance, repair, removal, or
10 replacement of the vegetable garden;

11 (B) costs for damage to any common element or limited common
12 element resulting from installation, maintenance, repair, removal, or
13 replacement;

14 (C) costs for water or electricity associated with the use of the
15 vegetable garden; and

16 (D) disclosing to prospective buyers of the unit the existence of any
17 vegetable garden and the related responsibilities of the unit owner under this
18 section.

19 (c) This section shall not prohibit an association from enacting bylaws or
20 rules that reasonably restrict the installation or use of a vegetable garden in an

1 area of the common interest community designated for exclusive use of the
2 unit owner, including:

3 (1) regulating the erection and installation of permanent or temporary
4 structures;

5 (2) requiring that a vegetable garden be maintained in good condition if
6 visible from the street faced by the lot or from an adjoining lot;

7 (3) requiring that dead plant materials and weeds are regularly cleared
8 from the vegetable garden, with the exception of straw, mulch, compost, and
9 other organic material intended to encourage vegetation and retention of
10 moisture in the soil;

11 (4) restricting the use of property owned in common and not for the
12 exclusive use of a unit owner; and

13 (5) prohibiting the use of pesticides, as that term is defined in 6 V.S.A.
14 § 1101, or any other synthetic chemical product commonly used in the growing
15 of plant crops.

16 (d)(1) An association may provide written notice to a unit owner of a
17 violation of the bylaws or rules adopted pursuant to this section and provide
18 the unit owner not less than 10 days to correct the violation.

19 (2) An association may take steps to correct a violation that remains
20 uncorrected after the 10 days period provided to the unit owner in subdivision
21 (1) of this subsection (d).

1 (3) Any costs to the association necessary for correcting a violation may
2 be charged back to the unit owner.

3 Sec. 3. 9 V.S.A. § 4456c is added to read:

4 § 4456c. VEGETABLE GARDENS

5 (a) As used in this section, “vegetable garden” means the outdoor
6 cultivation of plants for personal consumption or donation and the land and
7 activities on it are not subject to the required agricultural practices. A
8 “vegetable garden” does not include cultivation of cannabis or any unlawful
9 crops or substances.

10 (b)(1) A landlord shall permit a tenant to grow a vegetable garden in
11 portable containers approved by the landlord in the tenant’s rented space.

12 (2) A landlord may authorize a tenant to install a vegetable garden, other
13 than that which is contained in portable containers, on the rental property.

14 (c) A landlord may place reasonable restrictions on the installation and use
15 of vegetable gardens, including:

16 (1) requiring that a vegetable garden be maintained in good condition;

17 (2) requiring that dead plant materials and weeds are regularly cleared
18 from the vegetable garden, with the exception of straw, mulch, compost, and
19 other organic material intended to encourage vegetation and retention of
20 moisture in the soil;

1 (3) requiring that the vegetable garden does not interfere with the
2 maintenance of the rental property;

3 (4) requiring that the placement of the vegetable garden does not
4 interfere with a tenant parking space or create a health or safety hazard, block
5 doorways, or interfere with walkways or utility services or equipment; and

6 (5) prohibiting the use of pesticides, as that term is defined in 6 V.S.A.
7 § 1101, or any other synthetic chemical product commonly used in the growing
8 of plant crops.

9 (d) A landlord may require a tenant to pay for any excess water, electricity,
10 and waste collection bills arising from the tenant’s personal vegetable garden.

11 (e)(1) A landlord may charge a security deposit for the installation of a
12 vegetable garden under subdivision (b)(2) of this section for the purpose of
13 securing against damages or removal of the vegetable garden upon the
14 termination of the rental agreement.

15 (2) The provisions on section 4461 of this title shall apply to a security
16 deposit received under this subsection (e).

17 Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

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

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21 (Committee vote: _____)

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Representative _____

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FOR THE COMMITTEE