

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Commerce and Economic Development to which was
3 referred Senate Bill No. 327 entitled “An act relating to economic
4 development” respectfully reports that it has considered the same and
5 recommends that the House propose to the Senate that the bill be amended by
6 striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the
7 following:

8 Sec. 1. [Deleted.]

9 Sec. 2. [Deleted.]

10 Sec. 3. [Deleted.]

11 Sec. 4. [Deleted.]

12 Sec. 5. [Deleted.]

13 Sec. 6. [Deleted.]

14 * * * Business Resources and Growth Study * * *

15 Sec. 7. BUSINESS RESOURCES AND GROWTH; INVENTORY; STUDY;

16 REPORT

17 (a) Business growth and development study. The Commissioner of
18 Economic Development, in consultation with stakeholders, for the purpose of
19 determining how the State can better enable and support the growth of
20 Vermont businesses, shall:

1 (1) clearly define each stage of business development in order to provide
2 business leaders, investors, and the General Assembly with an understanding
3 of the resources businesses need at each stage of development;

4 (2) identify the public and private resources available to businesses and
5 determine how the resources are currently communicated to businesses;

6 (3) create an inventory of resources, pursuant to subdivision (2) of this
7 subsection, that are poised to serve businesses for each stage of development;

8 (4) determine how best to communicate the inventory of resources
9 created pursuant to subdivision (3) of this subsection to Vermonters and the
10 business community;

11 (5) determine how to better communicate succession planning options
12 for businesses;

13 (6) identify what resources are available to businesses to access capital;

14 (7) determine the state of capital access opportunities, including the:

15 (A) investment environment in Vermont and the New England
16 region;

17 (B) availability of tax credits to leverage private capital; and

18 (C) requirements to maintain Vermont’s Tech Hub designation; and

19 (8) identify investor education opportunities for high net worth
20 individuals interested in investing in Vermont businesses.

1 (b) Report. On or before December 15, 2026, the Commissioner shall
2 submit a written report to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic
3 Development and the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing
4 and General Affairs with the Commissioner’s findings pursuant to the business
5 resources and growth study set forth in this section along with any
6 recommendations for legislative action.

7 * * * Convention Center Task Force * * *

8 Sec. 8. 2025 Acts and Resolves No. 65, Sec. 3 is amended to read:

9 Sec. 3. TASK FORCE TO EXPLORE DEVELOPMENT OF

10 CONVENTION CENTER AND PERFORMANCE VENUE

11 * * *

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

14 (1) one current member of the House of Representatives, who shall be
15 appointed by the Speaker of the House;

16 (2) one current member of the Senate, who shall be appointed by the
17 Committee on Committees;

18 (3) the Commissioner of the Department of Economic Development or
19 designee;

- 1 (4) the President of the Vermont Chamber of Commerce or designee;
- 2 (5) the Chief Executive Officer of the Lake Champlain Chamber of
- 3 Commerce or designee;
- 4 (6) the President of the Vermont Regional Development Corporations or
- 5 designee; ~~and~~
- 6 (7) the Chair of the Vermont Association of Planning and Development
- 7 Agencies or designee; and
- 8 (8) the President of the University of Vermont or designee.

9 * * *

10 (e) Reports. On or before November 1, 2025 2026, the Task Force shall

11 submit an updated interim report to the House Committee on Commerce and

12 Economic Development and the Senate Committee on Economic

13 Development, Housing and General Affairs with an update on its work

14 pursuant to subsection (c) of this section. On or before November 1, 2026 July

15 1, 2027, the Task Force shall submit a final written report to the House

16 Committee on Commerce and Economic Development and the Senate

17 Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs with its

18 findings and any recommendations for legislative action.

19 (f) Meetings.

20 * * *

21 (4) The Task Force shall cease to exist on December 1, 2026 2027.

1 ~~Vermont Employment Growth Incentive under 32 V.S.A. chapter 105,~~
2 ~~subchapter 2 on or after January 1, 2027. [Repealed.]~~

3 * * * Study of Culinary and Hospitality Education * * *

4 Sec. 10a. CULINARY AND HOSPITALITY EDUCATION; STUDY;
5 REPORT

6 (a) Purpose and findings. The State of Vermont lost a significant
7 contributor to its culinary and hospitality workforce pipeline when the New
8 England Culinary Institute closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The
9 General Assembly finds that the establishment of postsecondary educational
10 programs in the fields of culinary arts and hospitality is critical for the long-
11 term workforce needs in those sectors and for the economic health of the State.

12 (b) Task. The Department of Labor, in collaboration with the Vermont
13 Chamber of Commerce, shall engage with the stakeholders set forth in
14 subsection (c) of this section to determine how best to develop postsecondary
15 educational programs in the fields of culinary arts and hospitality by:

16 (1) investigating suitable locations that could host the programs;

17 (2) researching and identifying possible educational and business
18 models;

19 (3) identifying organizations that could stand up, administer, or operate
20 the programs;

1 (4) gauging the interest from private investors to determine whether
2 there is interest in private **funding for the programs**;

3 (5) **establishing** relationships with culinary and **hospitality businesses** in
4 Vermont that have or will have workforce needs;

5 (6) conducting any additional research or outreach that would promote
6 the **development of the programs**; and

7 (7) **cataloging culinary and hospitality opportunities currently available**
8 **for certificates and training.**

9 (c) Stakeholders. The **Department** shall consult and convene with
10 stakeholders to assist in its work pursuant to subsection (b) of this section that
11 have relevant experience in the food and hospitality sectors, including
12 representation from the State Workforce Development Board, **Office of**
13 **Workforce Strategy and Development**, Vermont Association of Career and
14 Technical Directors, Vermont Professionals of Color, Vermont Independent
15 Restaurants, **Vermont Specialty Foods Association**, **Vermont Lodging**
16 **Association**, University of Vermont, Vermont State Colleges System, Vermont
17 Sustainable Jobs Fund, Vermont Employee Ownership Center, and **an**
18 **institutional food and beverage provider.**

19 (d) Report. On or before December 1, 2026, the **Department** shall submit a
20 written report to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic
21 Development and the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing

1 and General Affairs with its findings and information gathered pursuant to
2 subsection (b) of this section along with any recommendations concerning the
3 development of postsecondary educational programs for culinary arts and
4 hospitality. The report shall also list the stakeholders consulted pursuant to
5 subsection (c) of this section.

6 * * * Culinary Apprenticeship Pilot Program * * *

7 Sec. 10b. HOSPITALITY AND CULINARY APPRENTICESHIP PILOT;
8 REPORT

9 (a) Creation and purpose; coordination.

10 (1) The Department of Labor, through the Vermont Registered
11 Apprenticeship Program, shall establish and maintain a two-year hospitality
12 and culinary apprenticeship pilot that develops and evaluates a new registered
13 apprenticeship training program specific to accommodation and food services.
14 The pilot shall be structured as a regional, multi-employer model, with the goal
15 of the program being to strengthen workforce pathways and improve job
16 quality in the hospitality and culinary services, which have been identified as
17 priority sectors by the State Workforce Development Board.

18 (2) The Department shall coordinate its work on the pilot with the
19 Department of Tourism and Marketing, Department of Economic
20 Development, Office of Workforce Strategy and Development, and Vermont
21 Chamber of Commerce.

1 (b) Pilot details.

2 (1) The Department shall:

3 (A) implement the pilot in a **hospitality**-based regional economy and
4 include multiple employers, including at least one large employer, located
5 within the same regional economy;

6 (B) incorporate an intermediary or coordinating entity;

7 (C) include structured work-based learning across more than one
8 employer;

9 (D) align with education and training providers, including secondary
10 and adult career technical education programs;

11 (E) be structured to rely on existing resources, including the physical
12 assets of schools, technical centers, and restaurants;

13 (F) be built around not more than two apprenticeable occupations, as
14 that term is defined in 21 V.S.A. § 1111(4); and

15 (G) establish specific numeric targets and track outcomes including
16 completion, retention, and wage progression.

17 (2) The pilot shall be designed to achieve, at minimum:

18 (A) participation of multiple employers;

1 (B) enrollment of at least one apprentice cohort; and

2 (C) measurable completion outcomes.

3 (c) Funding. The Department shall implement the pilot using existing State
4 and federal funds to the extent practicable and may seek additional grants or
5 funding as such funds become available.

6 (d) Report. The Department shall, based on its work on the hospitality and
7 culinary apprenticeship pilot set forth in this section, submit to the House
8 Committee on Commerce and Economic Development and the Senate
9 Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs:

10 (1) on or before December 15, 2026, an interim written report on the
11 progress of the pilot program that includes the design, participation, and
12 preliminary results of the pilot; and

13 (2) on or before December 15, 2028, a final written report on the pilot
14 program, including outcomes, evaluation of effectiveness, and
15 recommendations for future legislative action.

16 Sec. 11. [Deleted.]

17 * * * Rural Industry Development Grant Program * * *

18 Sec. 12a. 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 78, Sec. F.8 is amended to read:

19 Sec. F.8 ~~RURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM~~

20 ~~(a) Creation; purpose.~~

1 ~~(1) A Rural Industry Development Grant Program is created within the~~
2 ~~Agency of Commerce and Community Development to provide grant funding~~
3 ~~through local development corporations for business relocation and expansion~~
4 ~~efforts, including the purchase, demolition, and renovation of property for~~
5 ~~industrial use.~~

6 ~~(2)(A) To the extent funding is appropriated, the Agency shall make~~
7 ~~grants through the Program to assist local development corporations with~~
8 ~~business relocation and expansion efforts throughout Vermont.~~

9 ~~(B) The Agency shall ensure an accounting of the respective State~~
10 ~~and Grantee shares of investment in any property be maintained to refund to~~
11 ~~the State an appropriate share of any net proceeds resulting from future sale or~~
12 ~~transfer of such property acquired or improved through a grant awarded under~~
13 ~~this program.~~

14 ~~(b) Grant considerations. In making grant awards, the Agency shall~~
15 ~~consider:~~

16 ~~(1) the real estate needs of growing and relocating businesses, including~~
17 ~~nonprofit organizations, in the applicant's region;~~

18 ~~(2) the ability of the proposed project to meet the site-specific needs of~~
19 ~~businesses considering whether to expand or locate in this State;~~

20 ~~(3) the funding that the applicant has identified, or secured, to leverage a~~
21 ~~grant award; and~~

1 ~~(4) the readiness of an applicant to move a project forward.~~

2 ~~(e) Eligible applicants; priority.~~

3 ~~(1) To be eligible for a grant, an applicant must be a local development~~
4 ~~corporation, as defined in subdivision 212(10) of this title, located within this~~
5 ~~State.~~

6 ~~(2) The Secretary of Commerce and Community Development may~~
7 ~~designate projects and agreements as first priority based on rural communities~~
8 ~~that continue to experience insufficient economic and grand list growth.~~

9 ~~(d) Eligible activities. A grant recipient may use funding for the following:~~

10 ~~(1) to purchase land for potential industrial use;~~

11 ~~(2) for the costs of site development, permitting, or providing~~
12 ~~infrastructure for property the recipient owns;~~

13 ~~(3) for the equity investment required for a loan transaction through the~~
14 ~~Vermont Economic Development Authority under 10 V.S.A. chapter 12,~~
15 ~~subchapter 3; or~~

16 ~~(4) for the matching requirement of another State or federal grant~~
17 ~~consistent with this section.~~

18 ~~(e) Application; market assessment.~~

19 ~~(1) An applicant shall include in its application a local and regional~~
20 ~~market assessment that demonstrates reasonable need for the proposed~~

1 ~~development and identifies imminent, potential, or existing business growth~~
2 ~~opportunities.~~

3 ~~(2) An applicant shall submit the following to demonstrate a readiness to~~
4 ~~begin and complete the proposed project:~~

5 ~~(A) community and regional support for the project;~~

6 ~~(B) that grant funding is needed to complete the proposed project;~~

7 ~~(C) an ability to manage the project, with requisite experience and a~~
8 ~~plan for fiscal viability; and~~

9 ~~(D) a description of the permitting required to proceed with the~~
10 ~~project and a plan for obtaining the permits.~~

11 ~~(f) Awards; amount.~~

12 ~~(1) An award shall not exceed the lesser of \$1,000,000 or 20 percent of~~
13 ~~the total project cost.~~

14 ~~(2) A recipient may combine grant funds with funding from other~~
15 ~~sources.~~

16 ~~(3) The Agency shall release grant funds upon determining that the~~
17 ~~applicant has met all application conditions and requirements.~~

18 ~~(4) A grant recipient may apply for additional grant funds if future~~
19 ~~amounts are appropriated for the Program and the funds are for a separate but~~
20 ~~eligible use.~~

1 ~~(g) Deed restrictions; property sales. The Agency shall include deed~~
2 ~~restrictions that require the return of the principal amount to the state and may~~
3 ~~require the payment of a percentage of the sales profit. [Repealed.]~~

4 Sec. 12b. 10 V.S.A. § 6 is added to read:

5 § 6. RURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM

6 (a) Creation; purpose.

7 (1) The Rural Industry Development Grant Program is created within
8 the Agency of Commerce and Community Development to provide grant
9 funding through local development corporations for the purpose of business
10 relocation and expansion activities set forth in subsection (d) of this section.

11 (2) To the extent funding is appropriated, the Agency shall make grants
12 through the Program fund to assist local development corporations with
13 business relocation and expansion efforts throughout Vermont.

14 (3) As used in this section, “federally impacted property” means real
15 property that is:

16 (A) owned by the United States or by any federal agency or an
17 instrumentality thereof; or

18 (B) under the custody or control of a federally appointed receiver,
19 trustee, or conservator, and includes property subject to federal court
20 jurisdiction.

1 (b) Grant considerations. In making grant awards, the Agency shall
2 consider:

3 (1) the real estate needs of growing and relocating businesses, including
4 nonprofit organizations, in the applicant’s region;

5 (2) the ability of the proposed project to meet the site-specific needs of
6 businesses considering whether to expand or locate in this State;

7 (3) the funding that the applicant has identified, or secured, to leverage a
8 grant award; and

9 (4) the readiness of an applicant to move a project forward.

10 (c) Eligible applicants; priority.

11 (1) To be eligible for a grant, an applicant must be a local development
12 corporation, as defined in subdivision 212(10) of this title, located within this
13 State.

14 (2) The Secretary of Commerce and Community Development may
15 designate projects and agreements as first priority based on rural communities
16 that continue to experience insufficient economic and grand list growth.

17 (d) Eligible activities. A grant recipient shall use any funding provided
18 through this section only for the following:

19 (1) to purchase real property for potential industrial, commercial, or, in
20 the case of a federally impacted property, residential use;

1 (2) for the costs of site development, permitting, or providing
2 infrastructure for property the recipient owns;

3 (3) for a project that supports future commercial or industrial
4 development as outlined in a development agreement;

5 (4) for the equity investment required for a loan transaction through the
6 Vermont Economic Development Authority under 10 V.S.A. chapter 12,
7 subchapter 3;

8 (5) for the matching requirement of another State or federal grant
9 consistent with this section; or

10 (6) for the purchasing, holding, and renovation of property for the
11 repurposing or redevelopment of a federally impacted property.

12 (e) Application; market assessment.

13 (1) An applicant shall include in its application a local and regional
14 market assessment that demonstrates reasonable need for the proposed
15 development and identifies imminent, potential, or existing business growth
16 opportunities.

17 (2) An applicant shall submit the following to demonstrate a readiness to
18 begin and complete the proposed project:

19 (A) community and regional support for the project;

20 (B) that grant funding is needed to complete the proposed project;

1 (C) an ability to manage the project, with requisite experience and a
2 plan for fiscal viability; and

3 (D) a description of the permitting required to proceed with the
4 project and a plan for obtaining the permits.

5 (f) Awards; amount.

6 (1)(A) An award shall not exceed the lesser of \$1,000,000.00 or 50
7 percent of the total project cost, subject to the exception in subdivision (B) of
8 this subdivision (1).

9 (B) An award may exceed \$1,000,000.00 but shall not exceed
10 \$2,000,000.00 if the property is classified as a federally impacted property and
11 the Secretary certifies that the project is located in:

12 (i) a designated downtown development district; and

13 (ii) a rural economic area partnership program (REAP Zone); or

14 (iii) a federally declared natural disaster area, provided the
15 declaration was made not more than five years from the application date.

16 (2) A recipient may combine grant funds with funding from other
17 sources.

18 (3) The Agency shall release grant funds upon determining that the
19 applicant has met all application conditions and requirements.

1 § 2. NICKEL ROUNDING; AUTHORIZED

2 (a) Definitions. As used in this section:

3 (1) “Cash” means coins or paper currency of the United States offered in
4 physical form.

5 (2) “Cash transaction” means a sale of goods or services where payment
6 is made entirely or partially in cash.

7 (3) “Rounding” means adjusting the final total amount due, after taxes
8 and fees, to the nearest five-cent increment.

9 (b) Rounding authorization.

10 (1) A person or business engaged in a cash transaction may round the
11 final amount due to the nearest \$0.05 as follows:

12 (A) If the final digit of the amount due is \$0.01, \$0.02, \$0.06, or
13 \$0.07, rounded down to the nearest amount divisible by five.

14 (B) If the final digit of the amount due is \$0.03, \$0.04, \$0.08, or
15 \$0.09, rounded up to the nearest amount divisible by five.

16 (2) If a person or business rounds a cash transaction under this section,
17 any cash refund of the amount paid shall be issued to the purchaser in the exact
18 amount initially paid for the goods or service.

19 (c) Exclusions. This section shall not apply to:

20 (1) electronic and other noncash payments;

21 (2) payment of wages as that term is defined in 21 V.S.A. § 341;

1 (3) rebates or cash disbursements; and

2 (4) transactions governed by federal law that prohibits rounding.

3 (d) Application. Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, rounding under
4 this section shall not constitute an unlawful price increase, surcharge, unfair or
5 deceptive act or practice in commerce, or discrimination.

6 (e) Required notice.

7 (1) A person or business rounding transactions under this section shall
8 post the following written disclosure in a clear and conspicuous manner at the
9 point of sale or at the entrance to the business:

10 “Vermont Law Authorizes the Rounding of Cash Transactions. A
11 person or business engaged in a cash transaction may round the final amount
12 due to the nearest \$0.05. If the final digit of the amount due is \$0.01, \$0.02,
13 \$0.06, or \$0.07, the final amount due may be rounded down. If the final digit
14 of the amount due is \$0.03, \$0.04, \$0.08, or \$0.09, the final amount due may
15 be rounded up. This does not impact electronic or other noncash payments.
16 For information or complaints, you may contact the Vermont Consumer
17 Assistance Program.”

18 (2) The Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets may issue a penalty
19 for the failure to provide the notice required under this subsection in
20 accordance with 6 V.S.A. § 687.

1 (c) As used in this subchapter:

2 (1) “Commercial or industrial building” means any building other than a
3 residential dwelling with fewer than five units.

4 (2) “District” means a commercial property-assessed clean energy
5 district which includes the entire municipality.

6 (3) “Resilience” means the ability of interconnected ecological, social,
7 physical, and economic systems to anticipate, adapt, withstand, respond, and
8 thrive in the face of current and future conditions and disasters.

9 (4) “Resiliency improvement” means improvements that increase the
10 resilience of a property, including air quality and stormwater infrastructure
11 improvements, snow and flood mitigation, energy storage and microgrids,
12 alternative vehicle charging infrastructure, and fire and wind resistance.

13 (5) “Water conservation improvement” means measures, equipment, or
14 devices that decrease the consumption of or demand for water, address safe
15 drinking water, or eliminate lead from water used for drinking or cooking.

16 § 3276. WRITTEN AGREEMENTS; CONSENT OF PROPERTY

17 OWNERS; ENERGY SAVINGS ANALYSIS; LENDER CONSENT

18 (a) Upon an affirmative vote made pursuant to section 3275 of this title and
19 the performance of an analysis pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, an
20 owner of a commercial or industrial building, within the boundaries of a
21 district, may enter into a written agreement with the municipality that shall

1 constitute the owner’s consent to be subject to a special assessment, as set forth
2 in section 3255 of this title. Entry into such an agreement may occur only after
3 January 1, 2027.

4 (b) Prior to entering into a written agreement, a property owner shall have
5 an analysis performed that includes the following components:

6 (1) where energy or water usage improvements are proposed, an energy
7 analysis by a licensed professional engineer or engineering firm stating that the
8 proposed qualified improvements will result in either more efficient use or
9 conservation of energy or water, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, or
10 the addition of renewable sources of energy or water;

11 (2) where renewable energy is proposed, an engineering study showing
12 that the improvements are feasible;

13 (3) where resiliency improvements are proposed, certification by a
14 licensed professional engineer stating that the qualified improvements will
15 result in improved resilience; or

16 (4) for new construction, certification by a licensed professional
17 engineer or engineering firm stating that the proposed qualified improvements
18 will enable the project to meet or exceed the energy efficiency or water
19 efficiency or renewable energy or water usage requirements of the current
20 building code and the Commercial Building Energy Standards established
21 under 30 V.S.A. § 53.

1 (c) A written agreement shall provide that:

2 (1) The length of time allowed for the property owner to repay the
3 assessment shall not exceed the life expectancy of the improvement. In
4 instances where multiple improvements have been installed, the length of time
5 shall not exceed the average lifetime of all improvements, weighted by cost.

6 (2) Notwithstanding any other provision of law:

7 (A) A lien under this section:

8 (i) is a first and prior lien on the property, subordinate only to a
9 lien for property taxes, from the date on which the notice of special assessment
10 is recorded until the assessment, interest, or penalty is paid; and

11 (ii) runs with the land, and that portion of the assessment under the
12 assessment contract that is not yet due shall not be accelerated or extinguished
13 by foreclosure of a property tax lien or any other foreclosure.

14 (B) In the event of a foreclosure action, all payments on an
15 assessment under this subchapter that are due and unpaid as of the date the
16 action is filed, and all payments on the assessment that become due after that
17 date and that accrue up to and including the date title to the property is
18 transferred to the mortgage holder, the lienholder, or a third party in the
19 foreclosure action shall be paid in order for title to transfer.

20 (3) A capital provider shall disclose to participating property owners
21 each of the following:

1 (A) the risks associated with participating in the program, including
2 risks related to the failure of participating property owners to make payments
3 and the risk of foreclosure; and

4 (B) the provisions of subsection (h) of this section that pertain to
5 prepayment of the assessment.

6 (d) The notice of an agreement shall include at least each of the following:

7 (1) the name of the property owner as grantor;

8 (2) the name of the municipality as grantee;

9 (3) the date of the agreement;

10 (4) a legal description of the real property against which the assessment
11 is made pursuant to the agreement;

12 (5) the amount of the assessment and the period during which the
13 assessment will be made on the property;

14 (6) a statement that the assessment will remain a lien on the property
15 until paid in full or released; and

16 (7) the location at which the original agreement may be examined.

17 (e) Prior to entering into the written assessment contract, the property
18 owner shall obtain and furnish to the municipality a written statement,
19 executed by each holder of a mortgage or deed of trust on the property
20 securing indebtedness, in their sole and absolute discretion, that consents to the

1 assessment and indicates that the assessment does not constitute an event of
2 default under the mortgage or deed of trust.

3 (f) The combined amount of the assessment plus any outstanding mortgage
4 obligations for the property shall not exceed 90 percent of the appraised real
5 property value of that property, as stabilized or as complete.

6 (g) With respect to an agreement under this section:

7 (1) the assessments to be repaid under the agreement, when calculated
8 as if they were the repayment of a loan, shall not violate 9 V.S.A. §§ 41a, 43,
9 44, and 46–50; and

10 (2) the maximum length of time for the owner to repay the assessment
11 shall not exceed 30 years.

12 (h) For projects under subchapter 2 of this chapter, there shall be no penalty
13 or premium for prepayment of the outstanding balance of an assessment under
14 this subchapter if the balance is prepaid in full. Projects under this subchapter
15 3 are not subject to these provisions, but shall be subject to the private
16 agreement for the financing of improvements.

17 (i) Property may be eligible for financing if otherwise qualified
18 improvements were completed and operational not more than 36 months prior
19 to submission of the application to the Program. Waivers to the 36-month
20 requirement may be granted in the sole discretion of the program
21 administrator.

1 § 3277. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS

2 (a) An entity that administers the commercial property-assessed clean
3 energy program or C-PACE Program under this subchapter shall be referred to
4 as a program administrator. A municipality, a public agency, or a private
5 entity may serve as a program administrator.

6 (b) A municipality that has adopted a C-PACE district may:

7 (1) enter into a contract with an entity to serve as the program
8 administrator and to administer the functions of the C-PACE Program for the
9 municipality; or

10 (2) serve as the program administrator itself, to administer the functions
11 of a C-PACE Program, including entering into C-PACE agreements with
12 commercial property owners in its jurisdiction and collecting C-PACE
13 assessments.

14 (c) An entity may:

15 (1) enter into a contract with a C-PACE municipality where the entity
16 shall serve as the program administrator in the municipality; and

17 (2) collect fees necessary to administer the C-PACE Program.

18 (d) Other than the fulfillment of its obligations specified in a C-PACE
19 agreement, neither the program administrator nor a municipality has any
20 liability to a commercial property owner for or related to energy savings or
21 resiliency improvements financed under a C-PACE Program.

1 **Sec. 14b. 24 V.S.A. § 3263 is amended to read:**

2 § 3263. COSTS OF OPERATION OF DISTRICT

3 The owners of real property who have entered into written agreements with
4 the municipality under section 3262 of this title shall be obligated to cover the
5 costs of operating the district. A municipality may use other available funds to
6 operate the district. A municipality may charge fees to cover the operation of
7 the C-PACE Program under subchapter 3 of this chapter.

8 **Sec. 14c. 24 V.S.A. § 3264 is amended to read:**

9 § 3264. RIGHTS OF PROPERTY OWNERS

10 A property owner who has entered into a written agreement with the
11 municipality under section 3262 or section 3276 of this title may enter into a
12 private agreement for the installation or construction of a project relating to
13 renewable energy, as defined in 30 V.S.A. § 8002(17), relating to resiliency
14 improvements as defined in section 3275 of this title, or relating to energy
15 efficiency as defined in section 3267 of this title.

16 **Sec. 14d. 24 V.S.A. § 3265 is amended to read:**

17 § 3265. LIABILITY OF MUNICIPALITY

18 (a) A municipality that incurs indebtedness for or otherwise finances
19 projects under this subchapter shall not be liable for the failure of performance
20 of a project.

1 (b) A municipality that incurs indebtedness for bonding under this
2 subchapter shall pledge the full faith and credit of the municipality.

3 (c) A municipality that enters into a written agreement with a property
4 owner under subchapter 3 of this chapter shall not incur any indebtedness or
5 otherwise finance projects under this chapter, nor shall be liable for the failure
6 of the performance of a project, nor shall pledge the full faith and credit of the
7 municipality.

8 **Sec. 14e. 24 V.S.A. § 3268 is amended to read:**

9 § 3268. RELEASE OF LIEN

10 (a) A municipality shall release a participating property owner of the lien
11 on the property against which the assessment under this subchapter or
12 subchapter 3 of this chapter is made upon full payment of the value of the
13 assessment.

14 (b) Notice of a release of a lien for an assessment under this subchapter or
15 subchapter 3 of this chapter shall be filed with the clerk of the applicable
16 municipality for recording in the land records of that municipality.

17 **Sec. 14f. 24 V.S.A. § 3255 is amended to read:**

18 § 3255. COLLECTION OF ASSESSMENTS; LIENS

19 (a) Special assessments under this chapter shall constitute a lien on the
20 property against which the assessment is made in the same manner and to the
21 same extent as taxes assessed on the grand list of a municipality, and all

1 procedures and remedies for the collection of taxes shall apply to special
2 assessments.

3 (b) Notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section, a lien for an assessment
4 under subchapter 2 of this chapter shall be subordinate to all liens on the
5 property in existence at the time the lien for the assessment is filed ~~on~~ in the
6 land records, shall be subordinate to a first mortgage on the property recorded
7 after such filing, and shall be superior to any other lien on the property
8 recorded after such filing. In no way shall this subsection affect the status or
9 priority of any municipal lien other than a lien for an assessment under
10 subchapter 2 of this chapter. A lien for an assessment under subchapter 3 of
11 this chapter shall be exempt from the provisions of this section and, upon
12 receipt of consent from lenders, pursuant to subsection 3276(e) of this title,
13 shall not be subordinate to all liens on the property in existence at the time the
14 lien for the assessment is filed in the land records.

15 **Sec. 14g. 9 V.S.A. § 46 is amended to read:**

16 § 46. EXCEPTIONS

17 Section 43 of this title, relating to deposit requirements, and section 45 of
18 this title, relating to prepayment penalties, shall not apply and the parties may
19 contract for a rate of interest in excess of the rate provided in section 41a of
20 this title in the case of:

1 (1) obligations of corporations, including municipal and nonprofit
2 corporations; ~~or~~

3 (2) obligations incurred by any person, partnership, association, or other
4 entity to finance in whole or in part income-producing business or activity, but
5 not including obligations incurred to finance family dwellings of four units or
6 fewer when used as a residence by the borrower or to finance real estate that is
7 devoted to agricultural purposes as part of an operating farming unit when used
8 as a residence by the borrower; ~~or~~

9 (3) obligations to finance the purchase, construction, or improvement of
10 property for seasonal or part-time occupancy and not as a place of legal
11 residence; ~~or~~

12 (4) obligations guaranteed or insured by the United States of America or
13 any agency thereof; or

14 (5) obligations incurred for commercial property-assessed clean energy
15 projects pursuant to 24 V.S.A. chapter 87, subchapter 3.

16 * * * Effective Dates * * *

17 **Sec. 15. EFFECTIVE DATES**

18 (a) This section (effective dates), Sec. 8 (convention center task force), and
19 Secs. 13a and 13b (nickel rounding) shall take effect on passage.

20 (b) Sec. 7 (business resources study); Sec. 9 (repeal of VEGI prospective
21 repeal); Sec. 10a (culinary education); Sec. 10b (culinary apprenticeship);

1 Secs. 12a and 12b (RIDP); and Secs. 14a, 14b, 14c, 14d, 14e, 14f, and 14g
2 (CPACE program) shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

3

4 (Committee vote: _____)

5

6

Representative _____

7

FOR THE COMMITTEE