Dear Representative Sheldon, please see below VHCB's responses to your questions, and thank you for the opportunity to provide these details.

We want to emphasize that all the conservation actions contemplated in the Act 59 Plan are voluntary for landowners. Conservation is the action of a landowner exercising their own property rights, and Act 59 will result in a non-binding Plan for both permanent and long-term conservation practices, including UVA.

Best,
Trey, Gus and Pollaidh

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**1. There is concern that Current Use is not a part of Act 59. Can you clarify?**

**VHCB Reply:**

**As VHCB and ANR work in consultation to finalize the Act 59 plan, we recognize and agree that Current Use is a critical tool for Vermont, its landowners and communities to protect our working and natural lands. Our plan will recommend that acres enrolled in current use are counted as durably protected and contributing towards the 50X50 goal. As ANR monitors progress of permanent and long-term conservation, the Agency will count acres enrolled in current use as part of the ongoing Act 59 inventory. All practices in the plan are voluntary tools that landowners can choose to utilize based on their own goals for their land. The nonbinding plan recommended by VHCB as a result of Act 59 will be subject to review by the General Assembly.**

**2. Does Act 59 allow for CU to be included in the inventory? (#3 under the inventory)**

**VHCB Reply:**

**Yes. Act 59 contemplates the inclusion of Current Use and other long term, durable measures. Section 2803(b) directed us to consider both "permanent and intermediate" practices to meet the goals of the Act.**

**3. Can you please confirm that Current Use meets the definition of 'other long-term land protection mechanisms and measures' for the 2050 goals?**

**VHBC Reply:**

**Yes. As noted above, it is VHCB's considered opinion that Current Use meets the long-term land protection mechanisms and measures contemplated by the Act.**

**4. Can you confirm that some lands that are permanently protected in the Conserved Lands Inventory, counting towards the 2030 goal, are also enrolled in the Current Use program?**

**VHCB Reply:**

**Yes. Lands enrolled in UVA and also permanently conserved do count towards the 2030 goal. Private land owners who permanently conserve almost always enroll in UVA and these lands are counted in the inventory.**

**5. Can you tell us please summarize the public outreach and engagement activities for the conservation plan? Has that included outreach to working lands organizations?**

**VHCB Reply:**

**We have received substantial public input over both phases of the Act 59 process from a broad range of stakeholders including working lands organization, and we will continue to work with partners and stakeholders long after this process is concluded. Those meetings have included numerous groups and individuals who work to protect and manage working lands, create access for rural enterprise and recreation, and produce forest and farm commodities.**

**Over the last three years we have held nearly 100 meetings for the public to engage in the plan and comment on the process. Just this spring, we heard from to 28 stakeholder groups who led close to 40 listing sessions. Right now, we are incorporating feedback into the final Act 59 plan from over 400 pages of public comment received as a result of those stakeholder led listening sessions.**

**Community feedback has emphasized how current use and the sale of development rights are both essential tools that landowners use to work, protect, and steward their lands. While they serve different roles, both will be incorporated into the strategy the Vermont Conservation Plan.**

Trey Martin, VHCB