

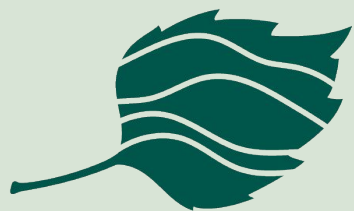


VNRC Testimony Re: S.325 - Development Provisions

**House Environment Committee
April 9, 2026**

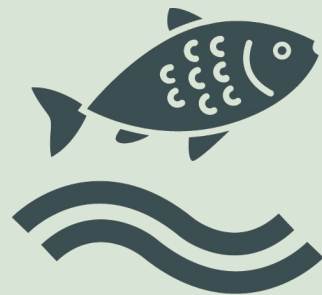


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VNRC VERMONT NATURAL RESOURCES COUNCIL

Through research, education, collaboration and advocacy, VNRC protects and enhances Vermont's natural environments, vibrant communities, productive working landscapes, rural character and unique sense of place, and prepares the state for future challenges and opportunities.



S.325 helps Act 181 deliver balance



Interim Housing Exemptions

Recommend caution on:

- Removing 10-acre cap in village centers/transit corridors
- Expanding exemptions to subdivisions
- Allowing 50-unit Priority Housing Projects without local bylaws

Need basic review to ensure:

- Safe siting outside hazard areas
- Affordability standards met
- Efficient land use patterns maintained

Downtown & Village Center Definition

Current proposed language is too broad and risks:

- Including auto-oriented commercial strips
- Weakening integrity of the Community Investment Program
- Creating confusion in FLU map implementation

Recommendation:

Revert to original statutory definition while developing clearer standards for “emerging centers,” or better define to protect the CIP

“Walking Distance” Standard

Replacing “walking distance” with “multimodal”:

- Introduces ambiguity with a less defined term
- Risks less connected development patterns

Recommendation:

- Revert to original language

Discretionary Review of Housing

Should expand scope and stakeholders:

- Include planners and non-profit developers with experience in municipal regulations
- Identify and weigh value of discretionary review with potential negative impacts, particularly with an environmental justice lens

Thank You



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