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February 5, 2026

House Government Operations and Military Affairs Committee  
Attention: Nick Adams, Committee Assistant

Subject: H. 679 - An act relating to emergency management in flood-prone municipalities  
Department of Environmental Conservation Testimony on Section 5 and Section 6

Neil Kamman, Deputy Commissioner

#### Section 5:

Intent: Establish a program to implement and improve stream flow projects in response to flood risks, including debris management, reservoir sediment management, river channel modification, and alternative flood mitigation strategies.

Key points:

- Regarding debris management, VEM and the state have mechanisms to clear critical debris, however, not all flood debris should be removed – this is part of the policy of the State to manage river to achieve dynamic equilibrium of streams, except in areas that are already densely developed.
- Regarding impoundment management, very few impoundments actually confer flood protection. Purpose-built flood control facilities such as Waterbury, Wrightsville, East Barre, Ball Mtn, North Springfield, and Union Village are managed such that sediment accumulation does not interfere with flood control capability. Sediment management on other smaller impoundments under the guise of flood protection is a misallocation of resources.
- Likewise, altering riverbeds to mitigate flood risk is a risky business indeed. River sediment removal is VERY RARELY a solution to retaining flood waters.
- DEC already does pursue and authorize flood mitigation projects.
- DEC is responsible for permitting all stream channel and floodplain projects of this nature, and cannot be in a position of regulating itself, which is why we rely on partner organizations to support floodplain and river corridor projects, whom themselves rely on the Clean Water Fund, and Federal and other funds, to accomplish this important work.

*To preserve, enhance, restore, and conserve Vermont's natural resources, and protect human health, for the benefit of this and future generations.*





Position: This section is not needed.

#### Section 6:

Intent: Create a new program which designates areas at significant risk of severe flooding, and create floodways to mitigate prospective flood damage. Also, support riverbank renaturalization projects.

Key points:

- It is already the policy of the State to manage river systems towards equilibrium, to reduce erosivity and fluvial erosion hazard, through floodplain restoration and reconnection, and dynamic equilibrium projects.
- Floodways are designated and mapped by FEMA and River Corridors are mapped by ANR. River bank projects are already supported and funded through the state Clean Water Fund and myriad other programs. Act 121 of 2023 requires promulgation of minimum floodplain standards, and river corridor protections statewide.

Position: This section is not needed.

