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STATE OF VERMONT
AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES

MEMORANDUM

TO: House Human Services Committee
FROM: Brendan Atwood, Agency of Human Services
DATE: March 12, 2026
SUBJECT: DR26-0766 Version 4.1 Written Comments

Dear Chair Wood and Members of the House Human Services Committee:

The Agency of Human Services is grateful for the opportunity to provide comments on DR26-0766, Version 4.1. We appreciate the Committee's continued work on this legislation and for the refinements reflected in this latest draft.

Overall, the Agency is supportive of the direction of this most recent version of the bill. In particular, we appreciate the Committee's focus on strengthening services for program participants, prioritizing the most vulnerable Vermonters, reducing reliance on hotel and motel placements, and establishing clear accountability standards. These are important goals that align with the Administration's broader efforts to improve outcomes for individuals and families experiencing homelessness while ensuring that the State's systems operate effectively and sustainably.

At the same time, as discussed previously with members of the Committee, the Agency has concerns about certain provisions in this draft of the bill. This includes language related to decisions made by the Human Services Board and the associated policy implications, as well as other areas where additional clarity is needed regarding scope, authorities, roles and responsibilities, definitions, timelines, and implementing reductions in hotel and motel use. These elements will be important to refine to ensure the program can be implemented effectively and that the intended policy goals are achievable in practice.

The Agency also notes that several aspects of the bill will require additional time for careful review to ensure appropriate due diligence. As with any significant policy change affecting service delivery and program administration, it will be important to confirm that the operational framework is workable and that implementation can occur in a way that supports both providers and the Vermonters they serve.

In addition, the Agency will need to ensure that any program structure ultimately adopted remains consistent with the funding levels included in the Governor's recommended budget and

does not exceed the Governor's proposed budget for these services. Maintaining fiscal alignment will be critical to ensuring the sustainability of the program and the State's ability to meet its broader obligations.

We believe the remaining issues can be addressed through continued collaboration with the Legislature as the bill moves forward. The Agency looks forward to working with the Committee and other stakeholders to refine the proposal where needed and to ensure that the final legislation supports the shared goal of strengthening Vermont's homelessness response system while remaining operationally and fiscally sound.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments, and we look forward to continued partnership as this work progresses.

Respectfully,

Brendan Atwood
Director of Policy and Program Integration
Agency of Human Services