

1 H.810

2 Introduced by Representatives Malay of Pittsford, Bailey of Hyde Park,  
3 Bartholomew of Hartland, Bosch of Clarendon, Boyden of  
4 Cambridge, Burditt of West Rutland, Charlton of Chester,  
5 Coffin of Cavendish, Demar of Enosburgh, Feltus of Lyndon,  
6 Goslant of Northfield, Greer of Bennington, Higley of Lowell,  
7 Hooper of Randolph, Keyser of Rutland City, Kimbell of  
8 Woodstock, Labor of Morgan, Masland of Thetford, Morgan, L.  
9 of Milton, Morgan, M. of Milton, Nielsen of Brandon, O'Brien  
10 of Tunbridge, Pinsonault of Dorset, and Walker of Swanton

11 Referred to Committee on

12 Date:

13 Subject: Motor vehicles; operation of vehicles; covered bridges; limits;  
14 penalties; technical assistance

15 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require the  
16 Agency of Transportation to provide assistance to municipalities in relation to  
17 establishing weight, height, and width limits for covered bridges; penalties for  
18 violating those limits; and potential opportunities to obtain grant funding and  
19 assistance to construct barriers or take other measures to prevent vehicles that  
20 exceed those limits from using covered bridges. This bill also proposes to

1 increase criminal penalties for arson of a covered bridge or intentionally  
2 injuring a covered bridge.

3 An act relating to protections for covered bridges

4 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

5 Sec. 1. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE; INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS;  
6 COVERED BRIDGES

7 The Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with the Secretary of  
8 Commerce and Community Development, the Vermont League of Cities and  
9 Towns, and, in the discretion of the Secretary of Transportation, other  
10 stakeholders, shall:

11 (1) on or before November 15, 2026, develop and make available to  
12 municipalities informational materials regarding establishing weight, height,  
13 and width limits for covered bridges and the enhanced penalties pursuant to  
14 23 V.S.A. § 1434(c) for persons who operate a vehicle on a covered bridge,  
15 which exceeds the limits established for that bridge;

16 (2) provide technical assistance to municipalities in relation to  
17 establishing weight, height, and width limits for covered bridges;

18 (3) provide information and technical assistance to municipalities  
19 regarding the construction of barriers, warning devices, and other measures

1 designed to prevent vehicles that exceed the weight, height, and width limits  
2 for a covered bridge from being operated on the bridge; and  
3 (4) provide information and technical assistance to municipalities in  
4 relation to potential opportunities to obtain funding or in-kind assistance  
5 related to the construction of barriers, warning devices, and other measures  
6 designed to prevent vehicles that exceed the weight, height, and width limits  
7 for a covered bridge from being operated on the bridge.

8 Sec. 2. 13 V.S.A. § 503 is amended to read:

9 § 503. SECOND DEGREE ARSON; ARSON OF A COVERED BRIDGE

10 (a) A person who willfully and maliciously sets fire to or burns or causes to  
11 be burned, or who willfully and maliciously aids, counsels, or procures the  
12 burning of any building or structure of whatsoever class or character, whether  
13 the property of ~~himself or herself~~ themselves or of another, not included or  
14 described in section 502 of this title, shall be guilty of arson in the second  
15 degree, and shall be imprisoned not more than five years nor less than one year  
16 or fined not more than \$1,000.00, or both.

17 (b) A person who violates subsection (a) of this section by committing  
18 arson of a covered bridge shall be imprisoned not more than 10 years nor less  
19 than two years or fined not more than \$2,000.00, or both.

1       Sec. 3. 13 V.S.A. § 3733 is amended to read:

2       § 3733. MILLS, DAMS OR BRIDGES

3       (a) A person who willfully and maliciously injures, removes, or opens a  
4       dam, reservoir, gate, or flume or injures or removes the wheels, mill gear, or  
5       machinery of a water mill, or injures, removes, or destroys a public or toll  
6       bridge, shall be imprisoned not more than five years or fined not more than  
7       \$500.00, or both.

8       (b) A person who willfully and maliciously injures, removes, or destroys a  
9       covered bridge shall be imprisoned not more than 10 years or fined not more  
10      than \$1,000.00, or both.

11      Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

12      This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.