

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Agriculture to which was referred House Bill No. 942  
3 entitled “An act relating to miscellaneous agricultural subjects” respectfully  
4 reports that it has considered the same and recommends that the Senate  
5 propose to the House that the bill be amended as follows:

6 First: By adding a new reader assistance heading and one new section to be  
7 Sec. 3a to read as follows:

8 \* \* \* Equine Farming for Use Value Appraisal \* \* \*

9 Sec. 3a. 32 V.S.A. § 3752 is amended to read:

10 § 3752. DEFINITIONS

11 As used in this subchapter:

12 (1) “Agricultural land” means any land, exclusive of any housesite, in  
13 active use to grow hay or cultivated crops, pasture livestock, cultivate trees  
14 bearing edible fruit, or produce an annual maple product, and that is 25 acres  
15 or more in size, except as provided in this subdivision (~~1~~). Agricultural land  
16 ~~shall include~~ includes buffer zones as defined and required in the Agency of  
17 Agriculture, Food and Markets’ Required Agricultural Practices rule adopted  
18 under 6 V.S.A. chapter 215. There shall be a presumption that the land is used  
19 for agricultural purposes if:

20 (A) it is owned by a farmer and is part of the overall farm unit;



1 (B)(i) who produces farm crops that are processed in a farm facility  
2 situated on land enrolled by the farmer in a use value appraisal program or on a  
3 housesite adjoining the enrolled land;

4 (ii) whose gross income from the sale of the processed farm  
5 products pursuant to subdivision (i) of this subdivision (B), when added to  
6 other gross income from the business of farming as used in subdivision (A) of  
7 this subdivision (7), equals at least one-half of the farmer’s annual gross  
8 income; and

9 (iii) who produces on the farm a minimum of 75 percent of the  
10 farm crops processed in the farm facility.

11 (C) The Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets shall assist the  
12 Director in making determinations of eligibility pursuant to subdivision (B) of  
13 this subdivision (7).

14 \* \* \*

15 (18) “Equine farming” means the raising, feeding, or management of  
16 four or more equines owned or boarded by the farmer, including training,  
17 showing, and providing instruction and lessons in riding, training, and the  
18 management of equines.

19 Second: By adding a new reader assistance heading and one new section to  
20 be Sec. 3b to read as follows:

21 \* \* \* Community Development Initiatives \* \* \*

1 Sec. 3b. 10 V.S.A. § 325m is amended to read:

2 § 325M. RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

3 (a) Definitions. As used in this subchapter:

4 (1) “Rural area” means a county of the State designated as “rural” or  
5 “mostly rural” by the U.S. Census Bureau in its most recent decennial census.

6 (2) “Small town” means a town in the State with a population of less  
7 than 5,000 at the date of the most recent U.S. Census Bureau decennial census.

8 (3) “Community Development Initiatives” means projects located  
9 throughout the State that support agriculture, historic preservation, outdoor  
10 recreation, and other critical economic development needs that may be  
11 supported when State resources or staffing assistance are not available.

12 (b) Establishment. There is created the Rural Economic Development  
13 Initiative to be administered by the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board  
14 for the purpose of promoting and facilitating community economic  
15 development in the small towns and rural areas of the State, and supporting  
16 Community Development Initiatives. The Rural Economic Development  
17 Initiative shall collaborate with municipalities, businesses, regional  
18 development corporations, regional planning commissions, and other  
19 appropriate entities to access funding and other assistance available to small  
20 towns and businesses in rural areas of the State when existing State resources  
21 or staffing assistance is not available.

1 (c) Services; access to funding. The Rural Economic Development  
2 Initiative shall provide the following services to small towns and businesses in  
3 rural areas:

4 (1) identification of grant or other funding opportunities that facilitate  
5 business development, infrastructure development, or other economic  
6 development opportunities; **and**

7 (2) technical assistance in writing grants, accessing other funding,  
8 coordination with providers of grants or other funding, strategic planning for  
9 the implementation or timing of activities funded by grants or other funding,  
10 and compliance with the requirements of grant awards or awards of other  
11 funding.

12 (d) Priority. In providing services under this section, the Rural Economic  
13 Development Initiative shall give first priority to projects that have received  
14 necessary State or municipal approval and that are ready for construction or  
15 implementation.

16 (e) Priority projects. The Rural Economic Development Initiative shall  
17 seek to assist the following priority types of projects:

18 (1) milk plants, milk handlers, or dairy products, as those terms are  
19 defined in 6 V.S.A. § 2672;

20 (2) outdoor recreation and equipment enterprises;

21 (3) value-added food and forest products enterprises;

