

I see H.398 was just assigned to Senate Appropriations. I'm reaching out on this because I received a request from Commissioner Danny Fitzko, ANR Department of Forest Parks & Recreation, to explicitly include forest operations in the eligibility criteria for the proposed Disaster Recovery Loan Program in H.398. The current language in the bill implies these entities are eligible so I do not see this as a material change and am supportive of this addition. Commissioner Fitzko also requested adding FPR as a consultative party. The bill passed out of Senate Finance before these changes were requested.

I've copied / pasted the relevant section of H.398 (starts at bottom of p. 30) and included the **proposed changes** to call out the forestry sector:

Subchapter 15.

Disaster Recovery Loan Fund 18 § 280gg.

DISASTER RECOVERY LOAN FUND

(a)(1) There is established within the Authority the Vermont Disaster Recovery Loan Fund, referred to in this subchapter as "the Fund," the purpose of which is to enable the Authority to provide loans and other forms of financial assistance to businesses, **including agricultural enterprises and forest products businesses**, after disasters.

(2) The Authority shall consult with the Secretary of Commerce and Community Development, the Secretary of Agriculture **and the Commissioner of Forest Parks and Recreation*** in determining whether funds shall be made available following a disaster event impacting areas of the State. A consultation shall not be required in the event of a disaster declaration declared by the Governor or the President of the United States.

(* or Secretary of Agency of Natural Resources)

I am happy to answer any questions on this request or other aspects of H.398.

Thank you.

Cassie

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