

S. 278 Testimony

February 28th, 2026

Prepared by Sam Bellavance

Farmer and Owner of Sunset Lake Cannabis
South Hero, Vermont

- The Cannabis industry employs over 1,000 Vermonters and has generated over \$75 Million in Tax Revenue.
- Cannabis farms and stores create much needed economic development in rural Vermont.
- My farm (Sunset Lake Cannabis) has created 20 jobs in South Hero, and employees make an average of \$30 per hour.
- These are the same value-added agricultural jobs that have traditionally sustained rural Vermont (Dairy, Maple, Beer, Etc.)

Why Reform is Needed?

- When cannabis was legalized in 2022, New York did not have a regulated market. Vermont's statutes need to be updated to create a fair playing field between Vermont and New York.
- In December 2025, The Trump administration issued an executive order calling for the rescheduling of Cannabis from a schedule I to a schedule III controlled substance, a necessary prerequisite to federal legalization. Vermont's highly restrictive cannabis statutes leave Vermont businesses woefully unprepared to compete in a nationwide marketplace.
- The following pages identify key reforms in S. 278 that will address these concerns and allow for the growth of a competitive cannabis industry in the state.

Advertising

- Vermont has some of the strictest advertising rules in the nation. Pre-Approval of advertisements wastes CCB resources.
- Advertising law is not enforced against out of state companies, putting Vermont business at a disadvantage.
- New York, Maine, and Massachusetts cannabis companies advertise to Vermont consumers (see example on next page).
- With impending federal legalization, Vermont businesses need the tools to create an export market.
- Vermonters will be seeing cannabis advertisements. Do we want them to be from Vermont small businesses or out of state corporations?

This is a New York Dispensary Advertising a Free car giveaway in Seven Days Magazine.

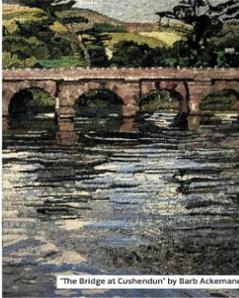
WEEK IN REVIEW

the Fish and Wildlife Board so that it serves in an advisory capacity to the Department of Fish and Wildlife. In addition, the bill would prohibit the hunting of coyote with dogs."

There is no language in the bill referencing foothold or body-gripping traps, as McCallum stated.

In the hallway outside the Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee room, while the committee was hearing public testimony on the matter, I was privy to a very civil conversation between two individuals on opposing sides of the bill. This exemplified precisely what has been lacking in the makeup of the Fish and Wildlife Board: seats at the table and the voices of diverse citizen perspectives.

As provided by Chapter II, § 67 of the Constitution of the State of Vermont, "The fish and wildlife of Vermont are held in trust by the State for the benefit of the citizens of Vermont." This means all citizens. A change to the makeup and power of the Fish and Wildlife Board would be a step in the right direction in order to ensure wider representation of all Vermont citizens.



"The Bridge at Cushman" by Barb Ackemann

70 artists from New England who were showcasing their diverse, astonishing art. The response was that a reporter had been assigned. After several weeks, I wrote again. I was told that the article was coming out the week the show was ending. The article was published 2.5 days

Editor's note: Kevin McCallum's February 28 story included points of view both for and against the bill. Further, his reporting was accurate — the bill that was before the Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee at the time the article was published included a provision to restrict trapping within 50 feet of any area "where persons may reasonably be expected to recreate," such as walking trails. The provision was removed from later bill drafts and was not included in the version the Senate approved on March 26.

BAD REVIEW

I am writing to respond to the review of "Trichomaney: Color Divination" that ran February 3 through March 16 at the Chandler Center for the Arts ["Fiber Works at Chandler Center for the Arts Tell Colorful Stories," March 13]. Fiber art has been staging a resurgence in the art world. The *New York Times* ran an article last fall that fiber art has come into its own, and recently the *Entrepreneur* in Cape Cod profiled an exhibit of over 50 artists who use fiber as their medium. Currently, felted art is being shown at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

I encouraged art editor Pamela Polston to please go see "Trichomaney," with over

was seeing or was not interested in fiber art. The article didn't reflect this exceptionally curated contemporary show. It showcased Ms. Tron's apathy about the art, going so far as to refuse to use the word "art" to describe it. At one point, she compared a glorious weaving to the size of a bed and said of Barb Ackemann's wonderful tapestry: "Despite the medium, it mimics a realistic painting."

No acknowledgment of the vastness and talent of these artists. It was a dry, slightly insulting article to get a paycheck, a real disservice to the artists and art lovers of Vermont.

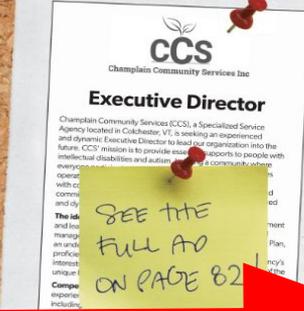
Susi Ryan
ESSEX JUNCTION

DOWNSIZE BUSES

In response to the article about Green Mountain Transit having to cut services if it doesn't receive more funds by 2025 ["Green Mountain Transit Says a Budget Crunch Could Lead to Service Cuts," March 25]. I say how about replacing older buses with smaller ones? I've never, ever seen a bus that was even close to full. All of these buses congesting our roads with only a handful of passengers doesn't make economic sense.

Pierre Lascombes
SOUTH BURLINGTON

Job of the Week



The Scoop on CCS

From Champlain Community Services Director of Operations Karen Ciechanowicz:

How was CCS founded?

KC: In 1967, a few brave families started CCS as an alternative to institutions for their loved ones who had intellectual disabilities and autism.

What's the culture like at CCS?

KC: It's a fun, welcoming environment with lots of laughter and support. I'm lucky to work with great people at an organization that's been named one of the Best Places to Work in Vermont for six straight years.

SEVEN DAYS jobs

Apply for this great local job and many more:
jobs.sevendaysvt.com



TRIBAL
LICENSED

Exotika DISPENSARY

NEW GIVEAWAY! Dodge Challenger/RT

Enter to win with any
in-store purchase!
DRAW DATE: May 26, 2024



PLATINUM

SATIVA: Unicorn, Tropical Cookies, Bruce Banner

HYBRID: Atomic Apple

INDICA: Bing SJ, Gorilla Berry, White Gorilla, Wifi Mintz, Tuna Cookies, Garlic Cookies

GOLD

SATIVA: HulkBerry, Oxygen 19, SnoMan

HYBRID: Pink Runtz, Cookiez 'N Cream, MeatBreath

INDICA: Alien Dawg, Banana Kush, Shishkaberry, Pink Kush

SILVER

SATIVA: Sour Patch Kids, Hawaiian

HYBRID: Runtz, Cinnamon Whorechata, Grape BubbleGum, Alien OG

INDICA: Dosi Gelato, Tahoe OG, Platinum Kush, Peach Mint Kush, Purple Gas, BubbleGum Gelato, Blue Cheese

Supreme Infused Pre-Roll Selection Rewards Program Available

HOW IT WORKS

Buy 5 pre-rolls for \$20 and get one stamp on your rewards card.

10 STAMPS = ONE FREE SET OF 5 PRE-ROLLS!

Or purchase a silver line ounce and get one stamp.

10 STAMPS = 1 FREE OUNCE!

Now offering a budget line:
\$50 OZ LINE!

Open 7 days a week • 8am-10pm
227 RT. 37, HOGANSBURG (in storage compound)
518-333-8106 • exotikadispensaryakwesne.com



Purchase Limits

- New York has a Purchase limit of 3 Oz.
Maine has a purchase limit of 2.5 Oz.
Massachusetts is in the process of raising their limit to 2 Oz.
Vermont has a purchase limit of only 1 Oz.
- Cannabis consumers, especially those in rural areas want to make large infrequent purchases (think Costco). A higher purchase limit would make it easier for infrequent purchasers to stock up.
- Our low purchase limit of 1 Oz. drives Vermont consumers to other states, and restricts the ability of Vermont businesses to attract out of state consumers.
- Raising the purchase limit to 2 oz. will allow us to compete fairly with neighboring states.

Product Registration

- There are currently over 5,565 Registered cannabis products. Registration is a timely and costly process that ends up using valuable CCB resources and places an undue regulatory burden on small operators.
- Do not confuse product registration with shelf stability. Shelf stability should be addressed via testing rules and mandated best by dates, not registration. An analogy would be the difference between getting your car inspected and getting your car registered. One is for safety the other is for state documentation and tracking.
- Neighboring states do not require any product registration! This puts Vermont producers at a disadvantage in anticipation of a national marketplace.
- All products should default to a 2 year product registration unless there is a specific requirement from the CCB or the Licensee to register it at one year.

Event Permitting

- Event permitting benefits growers and retailers by allowing them to meet consumers in spaces where they are already. Events also allow producers to attract out-of-state consumers.
- Concerts, weddings, and other private events are attended by 21 and older guests and have protocols for preventing over intoxication and intoxicated driving.
- Require a separate sales counter for cannabis and alcohol. But events need to be able to sell both to maintain economic viability.
- \$1000 is too high for an event fee. Insurance will be very expensive. The fee should be kept at \$100 during the pilot period until more data is collected.

Conclusion

- Vermont's cannabis industry is falling behind our neighboring states. Favorable legislation in New York, Massachusetts, and Maine make it easy for out-of-state corporations to attract Vermont residents.
- Vermont's cannabis statutes hamstringing the growth of small businesses and drive consumers to the dangerous unregulated market.
- Legislators need to prepare Vermont for a national marketplace. Do we want to be a state of Cannabis consumers, or a state of cannabis producers? Do we want to be a net importer or a net exporter? Do we want to create another 1000 jobs in Value added agriculture?
- S. 278 is an important first step in addressing these issues.

Thank you!



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