



Vermont Emergency Management
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DATE: April 15, 2026
TO: Senator Anne Watson, Chair, Senate Environmental
FROM: Eric Forand, Director, Division of Emergency Management, Dept. of Public Safety
SUBJECT: H.778 -An act relating to dam safety

Chair Watson- Please accept this memorandum as written testimony to the referenced bill currently in your committee.

Sec. 2 page 7 STATE OF VERMONT EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLANNING PILOT PROJECT; REPORT

Vermont Emergency Management supports this pilot project as dams are a potential high hazard and the response to their failure should be planned out prior to a disaster as it involves not only the dam owner but each individual town downstream from the structure, all emergency services in the area and dispatchers.

That being said I want to highlight how large and complex this project is. As I mentioned, the working group for one of the two dams could include multiple towns, each needing their own Emergency Action Plan (EOP). To create an EOP there will need to be outreach and coordination with multiple emergency service agencies, multiple dispatchers and others in the area including schools, hospitals, businesses, elderly care facilities and a whole host of other organizations. This means that there could be upwards of 50 or more entities that will need to be coordinated for just one dam. These entities will need to be surveyed, engaged, met with and consulted, all of which will take significant time and for this project that is times two.

The other part of this pilot is to create templates for future roll out to other dams, to evaluate cost, an access personnel and resources needed to replicate the pilot. There is also the need to evaluate how a contractor may be able to support this endeavor.

As you know I am not advocating for funding that is not in the Governors recommend, but I am highlighting all of this to point out that for the pilot to be successful the funding needs to remain with the proposed bill because it would be impractical if not impossible for Vermont Emergency Management to take this on given our current funding.

In-closing: Thank you in advance for your consideration, if you need additional information please contact me directly.

Eric Forand, Director, Division of Emergency Management, Department of Public Safety
