



April 7, 2026

To: Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Energy

From: Jared Carpenter, Lake Champlain Committee

Re: Priorities for the FY27 Budget

Priorities:

1. \$200,000 in one-time funding to DEC for implementation of the Chloride Reduction Program, including establishing Best Management Practices and the applicator certification program.
2. \$300,000 in base funding for two additional FTEs for the DEC Rivers Program to assist with Act 121 Flood Safety Act rulemaking, included in the House FY27 Budget Proposal.
3. \$125,000 in one-time funding to DEC to hire a third-party consultant to implement a training program for CAFO inspections.
4. \$375,000 in one-time funding for H.778 'An act relating to dam safety' pilot program, included in the House FY27 Budget Proposal.
5. \$300,000 in one-time funding for the Natural Resource Conservation Districts, included in the House FY27 Budget Proposal.

(1) \$200,000 in one-time funding to DEC for implementation of the Chloride Reduction Program

Not included in the House FY27 Budget Proposal

Implementation timeline in S.218:

January 15, 2027 – Fee Report due (not dependent on funding)

January 15, 2027 – ANR solicit third party vendor for training and certification program.

July 1, 2027 – ANR adopt Best Management Practices by rule.

November 1, 2027 – VTrans include BMPs to Local Roads curriculum.

Funding Timeline:

Year One:

- \$200,000 to ANR for the initial solicitation for third party vendors and establishing the Best Management Practices upon which to base the certification program.

Year Two:

- \$300,000 for two FTEs (one for ANR, one for VTrans) and \$200,000 to VTrans to set up municipal certification program.
- Fees for either or both programs are established to be collected in year three and ongoing.

Year Three and Ongoing:

- \$200,000 to VTrans to operate the program.
- Any General Fund request for ANR would be offset by collected fees, so the annual appropriation may vary.

Fee Report:

- The Fee Report is due January 2027, so next Session a decision can be made on the amount and applicability of possible fees.
- Report to include recommended fees for both commercial applicators and possible municipal fees.

(2) \$300,000 in base funding for 2 FTEs for the DEC Rivers Program, included in H.951 House FY27 Budget.

River Corridor rulemaking deadlines required under Act 121, the Flood Safety Act of 2024, have been missed due to staff capacity, but the 2 additional FTEs will help with rulemaking.

Language in H.951 House FY27 Budget Proposal

Sec. E.700.3 AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES; POSITION POOL; FUNDING

(a) Of the funds appropriated in Sec. B.700 of this act, \$300,000 General Fund shall be for two permanent, classified positions to be taken from the position pool: two Environmental Engineers.

Background

FY25 Budget authorized 15 new and converted 2 positions to DEC for Act 121 implementation

- Five Position for Dam Safety Program
- Ten Environmental Analysts for the Rivers and Wetlands Programs

*But the Budget did not provide funding for 15 positions, only \$1.625 million for 11 positions
\$1.625 / \$150,000 per FTE = 10.8 FTEs*

(3) \$125,000 in one-time funding for DEC to hire a third-party consultant to implement a training program for CAFO inspections.

Not included in the House FY27 Budget Proposal

The Act 67 CAFO Stakeholder Working Group has requested to meet quarterly to continue discussion on the implementation of the CAFO permitting program. Further, the Group has requested that ANR hire a third-party contractor to review current the inspection program and create a training program for both ANR and AAFM inspectors to ensure consistency across the CAFO permitting program.

Sec. Y. CONCENTRATED ANIMAL FEEDING OPERATION; TRAINING ON INSPECTION

(a)(1) On or before December 1, 2026, the Secretary of Natural Resources shall contract with a third-party consultant to:

(A) assist the Secretary in the development of standards and procedure to be used by the Agency of Natural Resources and the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets when inspecting Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) as required by 10 V.S.A. chapter 47, subchapter 3A; and

(B) provide training to the Agency of Natural Resources and Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets staff on implementation of inspection of CAFOs. Farmers that qualify for a CAFO permit may voluntarily attend training sessions.

(4) \$375,000 in one-time funding for H.778 Dam Safety Pilot Program, included in H.951 House FY27 Budget.

Total of \$375,000 including:

- \$250,000 in one-time funding for Vermont Emergency Management emergency operation plan pilot project
- \$125,000 in one-time funding for the DEC Dam Safety Program to assist in the completion of the emergency operations plan pilot project.

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

(a)(1) The Division of Emergency Management, in coordination with the Department of Environmental Conservation, shall conduct a pilot project under which the Division shall develop a set of emergency operations plans (EOPs) for two State-owned dams that have been classified as high-hazard potential. One of the dams shall have a population at risk of 1,000 or more persons and the other shall have a population at risk of 100 or more but fewer than 1,000 persons.

(5) \$300,00 in one-time funding for Natural Resource Conservation Districts, included in the House FY27 Budget Proposal.

Conservation Districts conduct agricultural water quality projects and are key partners in reaching the Lake Champlain TMDL goals.

Budget Language

B.1100(1)(2) AAFM Cons. Districts (pg. 100) \$300,000 FY26 \$250,000

(1) Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets. In fiscal year 2027, funds are appropriated for the following:

(2) \$300,000 General Fund for grants to Vermont's 14 Natural Resource Conservation Districts.