

**Agency of Commerce and Community Development**  
1 National Life Drive – Davis Bldg, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Montpelier, VT 05620-0501  
[accd.vermont.gov](http://accd.vermont.gov)

[phone] 802-828-3211

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Senator Kevin Mullin, Chair  
Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs

Representative Bill Botzow, Chair  
House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development

**CC:** Tom Torti, President  
Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce

Kiersten Bourgeois, Senior Project Manager  
Agency of Commerce

**FROM:** Patricia Moulton, Secretary 

**DATE:** September 30, 2015

**SUBJECT:** Vermont Quebec Enterprise Initiative

To the Honorable Senator Mullin and Representative Botzow, please find attached a status report of the Vermont Quebec Enterprise Initiative as required by Section G.10 of Act 51.

As you can see, work is well underway. We have yet to process a final grant agreement between the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber and the Agency. The agreement, a budget, performance measures and a work plan have all been finalized. It is in process to be completed shortly. ACCD processes a large volume of grants and contracts at the start of the fiscal year and beyond with only one person to complete this work so it takes a bit of time.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you as always for your continued support.

PM:lc

Attachment





### **1<sup>st</sup> Status Report – September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

This Report is filed pursuant to Act 51 of the 2015 Adjourned Session. Since July, 1st 2015 the following activities have been undertaken.

1. Outreach and discussions with the Regional Development Corporations has occurred both at individual locations (Franklin, Grand Isle, Lamoille and NVDA) and at a statewide RDC meeting held at the Agency of Commerce and Community Development.
2. A roundtable hosted by Governor Shumlin and organized by the VQEI was held in August to hear from Vermont companies that either have supply chain relationships in Quebec, parent companies in Quebec or sister companies in the province. Over 20 businesses participated and we were able to solicit their input on challenges, opportunities and ideas.
3. Meetings with Site Selectors were held in Montreal, PQ in an attempt to understand the relative strengths and challenges that Vermont faces when competing against other locations. These discussions focused on both global topics and topics relating to individual sectors for which Vermont might compete.
4. The LCRCC hired a part-time VQEI staff person with a strong background in marketing and promotion.
5. An Advisory Committee reflecting the statewide and bi-national nature of the VQEI was formed and held its first formal meeting. The meeting produced a list of issues that the VQEI will be pursuing and ideas for better integration into the Quebec market.
6. The VQEI-LCRCC entered into two agreements with the Federation of Chambers of Commerce of Quebec. The first (known as the COREX Agreement) established the creation of a business to business portal that will equally serve Vermont companies looking to expand their presence in Quebec and those Quebec companies looking for business connections in Vermont. The second was a more global agreement outlining areas for collaboration between the two entities.
7. The VQEI-LCRCC, in working with the Montreal Board of Trade, identified key sectors that differentiate Vermont from regional competitors and will be working

- to identify Quebec companies in those sectors that are interested in a Vermont presence.
8. We have held a number of meetings with the Quebec Consular office to host an event in October that will introduce VQEI to the larger business and political community in Quebec.
  9. The VQEI sponsored a tour of the Port of Montreal, in coordination with AN Deringer, and brought nearly 30 Vermonters to Quebec to understand the working of the Port and how Vermont businesses can take advantage of that resource.
  10. The VQEI-LCRCC met with and entered an agreement with the Alliance Francaise of Vermont to serve as interpreters for the VQEI on an 'as needed' basis.
  11. A VQEI Advisory Board member accompanied an ACCD staff person to meet with development officials in the Sherbrooke area focused on food producers and briefed the Granby Industrial Development Corporation on our efforts. With the CTAQ we discussed opportunities for collaboration to discuss such topics as labeling, selling craft beer more easily into our respective jurisdictions. We discussed possible supply chain efforts and ways to assist companies seeking to expand to Vermont from the Granby area, as well as assist Vermont companies interested in doing business with a company in their region.
  12. The VQEI-LCRCC has been working with ACCD and local real estate professionals to assist with the possible relocation of Quebec businesses to Vermont.
  13. VQEI staff are developing pitch materials and packages to be used with various audiences and that can be customized, where appropriate, for use by RDC's. This will be done in coordination with the Department of Economic Development marketing efforts for which funding was made available. All material will be created in English and French.
  14. In addition, the LCRCC has also met with business representatives from the Ontario region who have expressed an interest in Vermont.
  15. Additional business to business meetings in Vermont are in the planning stage.

This provides a summary update of activities to date. Further detail can be provided on any of the key points.

Respectfully submitted,



Tom Torti

President  
LCRCC