

State of Vermont

House of Representatives



Montpelier, Vermont

House Resolution

H.R. 5

House resolution amending the rules and orders of the House of Representatives related to member-sponsored funding of a specific construction project and the preparation of fiscal notes for bills prior to second reading

Offered by: Representatives Dickinson of St. Albans Town, Browning of Arlington, Canfield of Fair Haven, Degree of St. Albans City, Donaghy of Poultney, Donahue of Northfield, Fagan of Rutland City, Higley of Lowell, McFaun of Barre Town, Morrissey of Bennington, Pearce of Richford, Reis of St. Johnsbury, Savage of Swanton, Smith of New Haven, Stevens of Shoreham and Webb of Shelburne

Whereas, the members of the general assembly and the public are entitled to the maximum degree of transparency possible in the legislative process, and

Whereas, there is no more fundamental matter related to a bill than its projected implementation and annualized costs as well as the source of the revenue to meet these costs, and

Whereas, currently, many bills the costs of which are unknown are debated on the floor of the house, and

Whereas, although the joint fiscal office does draft fiscal notes when requested, there is not a formal house rule governing when a fiscal note is required, and

Whereas, requiring a fiscal note for every bill introduced could prove overly burdensome for the joint fiscal office, and a more reasonable policy would require a fiscal note as a prerequisite for a bill being read a second time on the floor of the house, and

Whereas, a type of legislation subject to especially close scrutiny is a legislator's earmarking of funds for a specific public- or private-sector construction or programmatic project, and

Whereas, the legislative approval of funding for those projects that entail state appropriations of \$10,000 or more should be debated publicly, either in committee or on the floor of the house, now therefore be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the rules and orders of the House of Representatives be amended:

First: By adding a new Rule 44a to read:

44a. No bill shall be read a second time unless the Joint Fiscal Office has prepared and distributed to all members of the House a fiscal note detailing the projected cost to and any revenue that will be raised for the treasury of the state of Vermont for the first three fiscal years that the legislation is in operational effect.

Second: By adding a new Rule 44b to read:

44b. The narrative text establishing a specific construction or programmatic project (unless included in legislation that the executive or judicial branch submits for the General Assembly's consideration) shall include the name of the project's sponsor(s) immediately adjacent to the project's description, state whether any sponsor(s) will benefit financially from the project, and, if the proposed expenditure of state funds for the project is at least \$10,000.00, there shall be a public debate in a committee or on the House floor prior to the third reading of the bill in which the proposed project is contained.

Shapleigh Smith, Jr.
Speaker of the House

Attested to:

Donald G. Milne
Clerk, House of Representatives

**H.R. 5 HOUSE RESOLUTION
AMENDING THE RULES AND ORDERS
OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
RELATED TO MEMBER-SPONSORED
FUNDING OF A SPECIFIC CONSTRUCTION
PROJECT AND THE PREPARATION OF
FISCALNOTES FOR BILLS PRIOR TO
SECOND READINGS**

Offered by: Rep. Dickinson of St. Albans,
Et al