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S.201

Introduced by Senator Rodgers

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Conservation and development; air pollution control; greenhouse gas
emissions

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require that
Vermonters be personally responsible for their greenhouse gas emissions.

An act relating to greenhouse gas emissions

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS

(1) Climate change poses a serious threat to the environment, general
welfare, and economy of Vermont and is both caused and exacerbated by
greenhouse gas emissions resulting from human activity.

(2) All Vermonters bear a personal responsibility to reduce or offset
their greenhouse gas emissions in order to address the problem of climate
change.

(3) Vermont's fields and forests sequester greenhouse gases. For
example, one acre of Vermont forest can sequester the equivalent of the annual

1 emissions of 83 vehicles. As a result, Vermont's landscape, and especially its
2 forests, can serve an important role in addressing climate change.

3 (4) Vermonters who own, and maintain, healthy forests should not only
4 be recognized for serving this important role, but they also should be able to
5 benefit from the role their property fills in offsetting the greenhouse gas
6 emissions of other residents.

7 Sec. 2. 10 V.S.A. § 587 is added to read:

8 § 587. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS; STATE RESIDENTS

9 (a) Every individual who resides in the State and whose income exceeds
10 150 percent of the federal poverty level shall:

11 (1) Track and report to the Agency of Natural Resources greenhouse gas
12 emissions attributable to his or her activities and property, including:

13 (A) electricity, fuel, and energy usage;

14 (B) employment;

15 (C) recreational activities;

16 (D) travel;

17 (E) diet;

18 (F) consumption of consumer goods;

19 (G) the heating and cooling of all buildings or structures that the
20 individual owns or has an ownership interest in; and

1 (H) any other activity or emissions source that the Secretary of the
2 Agency of Natural Resources deems appropriate.

3 (2) Track and report to the Agency of Natural Resources greenhouse gas
4 emission reductions and offsets attributable to his or her activities and property
5 including emissions sequestration.

6 (3) Take substantial and verifiable actions to reduce or offset the
7 greenhouse gas emissions attributable to his or her activities and property as
8 necessary for the State to meet the greenhouse gas reduction goals pursuant to
9 subsection 578(a) of this title.

10 (b) The Secretary of the Agency of Natural Resources, in consultation with
11 all appropriate stakeholders, shall, on or before June 1, 2021, adopt rules
12 pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 to implement the provisions of this section,
13 including:

14 (1) The tracking and reporting of greenhouse gas emissions and
15 reductions pursuant to subdivisions (a)(1) and (2) of this section.

16 (2) The verification and storage of information and data reported to the
17 Secretary pursuant to subdivisions (a)(1) and (2) of this section.

18 (3) The assignment of value to emissions reductions in a manner that
19 will allow an individual subject to this section to derive benefit from emissions
20 reductions attributable to his or her activities and property. Emissions
21 reductions and offsets attributable to activities and property within the State

1 shall be assigned a greater value and prioritized so that an individual shall only
2 be able to derive a benefit from emissions reductions and offsets attributable to
3 activities and property outside the State if reductions and offsets attributable to
4 activities and property within the State are not available or feasible.

5 (4) The assignment of value to emissions offsets in a manner that will
6 allow an individual who resides in Vermont to derive benefit from greenhouse
7 gas sequestration and other offsets that are attributable to his or her activities
8 and property located in the State.

9 (5) The assignment of a numerical score or letter grade to each
10 individual subject to this section that shall convey, in an easy-to-understand
11 format, the individual's greenhouse gas emissions and comparative
12 contribution to meeting the State's goals pursuant to subsection 578(a) of this
13 title.

14 (c) The Secretary shall, on or before January 15, 2022 and every January 15
15 thereafter, provide a written report to the General Assembly concerning the
16 implementation of this section. The Secretary may include recommendations
17 for legislative action as appropriate.

18 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

19 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2020.