

1 S.280

2 Introduced by Senators Hardy, Balint, Bray, Campion, Clarkson, Hooker,
3 McCormack, Pearson, Perchlik, Pollina and Starr

4 Referred to Committee on

5 Date:

6 Subject: Forestry; carbon sequestration

7 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require the
8 Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation to create resources for the
9 public on forest carbon sequestration. It creates a new analyst position at the
10 Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation to complete this work. It also
11 requires the Secretary of Natural Resources to evaluate the feasibility of
12 enrolling State land into a carbon market and to do so, if feasible. It requires
13 the Secretary to develop a plan to create a public-private partnership to
14 facilitate forest carbon sequestration projects.

15 An act relating to forest carbon sequestration programs

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

17 Sec. 1. PUBLIC RESOURCES FOR FOREST CARBON

18 SEQUESTRATION PROJECTS

19 (a) The Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation shall create
20 educational resources for the public regarding forest carbon sequestration.

1 These resources shall include information on the carbon cycle, requirements
2 for selling forest carbon credits, descriptions of the different markets and
3 registries for carbon credits, procedures for establishing a forest carbon
4 sequestration project on private land, and information describing the
5 compatibility between forest carbon credits and State programs, including the
6 Use Value Appraisal Program. These resources shall be made available to the
7 public on the Department's website and in print form.

8 (b) The Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation shall assist
9 municipalities in analyzing the feasibility of enrolling municipal forestland into
10 a carbon market, if requested by a municipality. Such assistance may include
11 project planning and development, parcel aggregation, public outreach and
12 education, and other forest services provided by the Commissioner and
13 required to ensure a successful carbon offset project.

14 Sec. 2. FOREST CARBON SEQUESTRATION PROJECT ON
15 STATE LAND

16 (a) The Secretary of Natural Resources shall evaluate the feasibility of
17 enrolling a parcel of State land into a carbon market and do so, if feasible. The
18 Secretary may engage the services of a forest carbon project developer in
19 evaluation. This project shall:

20 (1) serve as an anchor, if possible, around which a forest carbon
21 sequestration aggregation project may be developed;

1 (2) build staff expertise to assist municipalities and private land owners
2 with enrollment in carbon markets;

3 (3) provide a public model of exemplary carbon sequestration and
4 climate resilient forestry; and

5 (4) generate net revenue for the General Assembly to fund land
6 management costs, recreational improvements, greenhouse gas emissions
7 reduction projects, or additional land conservation or carbon offset efforts.

8 (b) On or before January 15, 2022, the Secretary shall report to the Senate
9 Committee on Agriculture and the House Committee on Agriculture and
10 Forestry on the results of the analysis required by subsection (a) of this section
11 and describe the timeline for implementing the project.

12 Sec. 3. PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP ON FOREST CARBON
13 SEQUESTRATION PROJECTS

14 (a) The Secretary of Natural Resources shall develop a plan to establish a
15 partnership between the Agency of Natural Resources and one or more private
16 organizations experienced in developing forest carbon sequestration projects.
17 The partnership would establish a statewide team to minimize the costs and
18 maximize the benefits of enrolling public and private land into a carbon
19 market.

20 (b) On or before January 15, 2021, the Secretary shall report to the Senate
21 Committee on Agriculture and the House Committee on Agriculture and

1 Forestry on subsection (a) of this section and describe the timeline for
2 implementing the partnership and any proposed statutory changes required to
3 establish the partnership.

4 Sec. 4. DEPARTMENT OF FORESTS, PARKS AND RECREATION;
5 POSITION; APPROPRIATION

6 (a) Establishment of one new full-time exempt position of Analyst within
7 the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation is authorized in fiscal year
8 2021. This Analyst shall assist the Commissioner in completing the
9 requirements of this act.

10 (b) There is appropriated to the Department of Forests, Parks and
11 Recreation from the General Fund in fiscal year 2021 the sum of \$100,000.00
12 to fund the position established in subsection (a) of this section.

13 Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE

14 This act shall take effect on passage.