



STATE OF VERMONT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

September 21, 2023

Necessary Updates to Act 250 Program Study Steering Committee Members
C/O State of Vermont Natural Resources Board
10 Baldwin Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-3201

Dear Study Committee Members:

Thank you for your commitment to the State of Vermont and your work on this important study about the necessary updates to Act 250. We are cognizant of your timeline for reporting on your work to the House Committees on Environment and Energy and Ways and Means and the Senate Committees on Finance and Natural Resources and Energy on these “necessary updates to the Act 250 program,” on or before December 31, 2023.

We are writing today to raise an issue that we respectfully request your report seek to clarify, and that is specificity around the definition of the following terms which appear in the description of the Steering Committee’s work or statutorily directed tasks:

1. “rural working lands”
2. “maintenance of intact rural working lands”
3. “minimize sprawl” as it relates to rural communities

In addition, a term that we are hearing more and more in discussion around Vermont’s land use and conservation policies would benefit from your added clarity and definition suggestions.

4. “rural sprawl” as it relates to Vermont’s rural communities and land use policies.

As representatives of rural Vermont communities and issues, we want to ensure consistency in application of the law as it relates to the building of critical infrastructure, community facilities and residential housing in all communities. Act 250 should not serve to restrict or delay rural Vermont communities’ and rural Vermonter’s access to reliable modern electric and broadband infrastructure, access to clean drinking water, education and healthcare services or the ability to utilize existing land for added family residences.

Act 250 was designed to achieve a balance between economic development and the legitimate interests of citizens, municipalities, and state agencies in protecting the environment.ⁱ We are concerned that the current administration, implementation and fee structures of Act 250 are out of balance and weighted too heavily against the everyday needs of poor and middle-income rural Vermonters.

Sincerely,

Rep. Laura Sibia, Windham – 2
Rep. Katherine Sims, Orleans – 4
Rep. Lisa Hango, Franklin – 5
Rep. Monique Priestley, Orange – 2
Rep. Jim Masland, Windsor Orange – 2
Rep. Kelly Pajala, Windham Bennington Windsor
Rep. Peter Anthony, Washington – 3
Rep. Carl Demrow, Orange – 1
Rep. Jim Harrison, Rutland – 11
Rep. Julia Andrews, Chittenden – 25
Rep. Lucy Boyden, Lamoille – 3
Rep. Bobby Farlice – Rubio, Caledonia – 3
Rep. Ashley Bartlett, Franklin – 1
Rep. Josie Leavitt, Grand Isle – Chittenden
Rep. Kirk White, Windsor - Addison

ⁱ <https://nrb.vermont.gov/act250-program/history#:~:text=Act%20250%20was%20designed%20to,of%20the%20fabric%20of%20Vermont.>