

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs to  
3 which was referred Senate Bill No. 256 entitled “An act relating to creating the  
4 New Vermont Employee Incentive Program” respectfully reports that it has  
5 considered the same and recommends that the bill be amended by striking out  
6 all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

7 \* \* \* New Worker Recruitment \* \* \*

8 Sec. 1. 10 V.S.A. chapter 1 is amended to read:

9 CHAPTER 1. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

10 \* \* \*

11 § 4. NEW VERMONT EMPLOYEE INCENTIVE PROGRAM

12 (a) The Agency of Commerce and Community Development shall design  
13 and implement a New Vermont Employee Incentive Program to award  
14 incentive grants to qualifying new employees as provided in this section and  
15 subject to the policies and procedures the Agency adopts to implement the  
16 Program.

17 (b) Incentives. A qualifying new employee may be eligible for a grant  
18 under the Program for qualifying expenses, subject to the following:

19 (1) A base grant shall not exceed \$5,000.00.

1           (2) The Agency may award an enhanced grant, which shall not exceed  
2           \$7,500.00, for a qualifying new employee who becomes a resident in a labor  
3           market area in this State in which:

4                   (A) the average annual unemployment rate in the labor market area  
5                   exceeds the average annual unemployment rate in the State; or

6                   (B) the average annual wage in the State exceeds the annual average  
7                   wage in the labor market area.

8           (c) The Agency shall:

9                   (1) adopt procedures for implementing the Program, which shall include  
10                  a simple certification process to certify qualifying new employees and  
11                  qualifying expenses;

12                  (2) promote awareness of the Program, including through coordination  
13                  with relevant trade groups and by integration into the Agency’s economic  
14                  development marketing campaigns;

15                  (3) award grants to qualifying new employees on a first-come, first-  
16                  served basis beginning on January 1, 2021, subject to available funding; and

17                  (4) adopt measurable goals, performance measures, and an audit strategy  
18                  to assess the utilization and performance of the Program.

19           (d) Annually, on or before December 15, the Agency shall submit a report  
20           to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development and the

1 Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs  
2 concerning the implementation of this section, including:

3 (1) a description of the policies and procedures adopted to implement  
4 the Program;

5 (2) the promotion and marketing of the Program; and

6 (3) an analysis of the utilization and performance of the Program.

7 (e) As used in this section:

8 (1) “New relocating worker” means an individual who on or after  
9 January 1, 2021:

10 (A) becomes a full-time resident of this State;

11 (B) becomes a full-time employee of a business domiciled or  
12 authorized to do business in this State;

13 (C)(i) is employed in an occupation identified by the Department of  
14 Labor in its 2016–2026 Long Term Occupational Projections as one of the top  
15 occupations at each level of educational attainment typical for entry; or

16 (ii) the Agency determines should otherwise receive an incentive  
17 grant under the Program because the worker possesses exceptional education,  
18 skills, or training or due to other extraordinary circumstances; and

19 (D) receives gross wages for the position that equal or exceed:

20 (i) 160 percent of the State minimum wage; or

1                   (ii) if the employer is located in a labor market area in which the  
2                   average annual unemployment rate is higher than the average annual  
3                   unemployment rate for the State, 140 percent of the State minimum wage.

4                   (2) “New remote worker” means an individual who:

5                   (A) is a full-time employee of a business with its domicile or primary  
6                   place of business within or outside Vermont;

7                   (B) becomes a full-time resident of this State on or after January 1,  
8                   2021; and

9                   (C) performs the majority of his or her employment duties remotely  
10                  from a home office or a co-working space located in this State.

11                  (3) “Qualifying expenses” means:

12                  (A) for a new relocating worker, the actual costs the new relocating  
13                  worker incurs for one or more of the following:

14                  (i) relocation expenses, which may include closing costs for a  
15                  primary residence, rental security deposit, first month’s rent payment, and  
16                  other expenses established in Agency guidelines; and

17                  (ii) expenses necessary for a new worker to perform his or her  
18                  employment duties, including connectivity costs, specialized tools and  
19                  equipment, and other expenses established in Agency guidelines.



1 for the New Remote Worker Grant Program and the New Worker Relocation

2 Incentive Program to:

3 (1) award incentives to new remote workers and new workers who  
4 qualify for an incentive under either of those programs until January 1, 2021;

5 and

6 (2) award incentives to qualifying employees under the New Vermont  
7 Employee Incentive Program created by this act on or after January 1, 2021.

8 Sec. 3. REPEAL

9 The following are repealed:

10 (1) 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 197, Sec. 1, as amended by 2019 Acts  
11 and Resolves No. 80, Sec. 15 (New Remote Worker Grant Program); and

12 (2) 2019 Acts and Resolves No. 80, Sec. 12 (New Worker Relocation  
13 Incentive Program).

14 \* \* \* Project-Based Tax Increment Financing Projects \* \* \*

15 Sec. 4. 24 V.S.A. 1892(d) is amended to read:

16 (d) The following municipalities have been authorized to use education tax  
17 increment financing for a tax increment financing district:

18 (1) the City of Burlington, Downtown;

19 (2) the City of Burlington, Waterfront;

20 (3) ~~the Town of Milton, North and South~~ Town of Bennington;

21 (4) ~~the City of Newport~~ City of Montpelier;

- 1 (5) the City of Winooski;
- 2 (6) the ~~Town of Colchester~~;
- 3 ~~(7) the~~ Town of Hartford;
- 4 ~~(8)~~(7) the City of St. Albans;
- 5 ~~(9)~~(8) the City of Barre;
- 6 ~~(10)~~(9) the Town of Milton, Town Core; and
- 7 ~~(11)~~(10) the City of South Burlington.

8 Sec. 5. TAX INCREMENT FINANCING PROJECT DEVELOPMENT;  
9 PILOT PROGRAM

10 (a) Definitions. As used in this section:

11 (1) “Committed” means pledged and appropriated for the purpose of the  
12 current and future payment of tax increment financing and related costs as  
13 defined in this section.

14 (2) “Financing” means debt incurred, including principal, interest, and  
15 any fees or charges directly related to that debt, or other instruments or  
16 borrowing used by a municipality to pay for improvements and related costs  
17 for the approved project, only if authorized by the legal voters of the  
18 municipality in accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 1894. Payment for eligible  
19 related costs may also include direct payment by the municipality using the  
20 district increment. However, such anticipated payments shall be included in  
21 the vote by the legal voters of the municipality in accordance with subsection

1 (e) of this section. If interfund loans within the municipality are used as the  
2 method of financing, no interest shall be charged. Bond anticipation notes may  
3 be used as a method of financing and may qualify as a municipality’s first  
4 incurrence of debt. A municipality that uses a bond anticipation note during  
5 the third or sixth year that a municipality may incur debt pursuant to subsection  
6 (e) of this section shall incur all permanent financing not more than one year  
7 after issuing the bond anticipation note.

8 (3) “Improvements” means the installation, new construction, or  
9 reconstruction of infrastructure that will serve a public purpose, including  
10 utilities, transportation, public facilities and amenities, land and property  
11 acquisition and demolition, and site preparation. “Improvements” also means  
12 the funding of debt service interest payments for a period of up to five years,  
13 beginning on the date on which the first debt is incurred.

14 (4) “Legislative body” means the mayor and alderboard, the city  
15 council, the selectboard, and the president and trustees of an incorporated  
16 village, as appropriate.

17 (5) “Municipality” means a city, town, or incorporated village.

18 (6) “Original taxable value” means the total valuation as determined in  
19 accordance with 32 V.S.A. chapter 129 of all taxable real property located  
20 within the project as of the creation date, provided that no parcel within the  
21 project shall be divided or bisected.

1           (7) “Project” means public improvements, as defined in subdivision (3)  
2           of this subsection (a), that meet the criteria set forth in subdivision (h)(2) of  
3           this section, with a total debt ceiling, including related costs, and principal and  
4           interest payments, of not more than \$1,500,000.00.

5           (8) “Related costs” means expenses incurred and paid by the  
6           municipality, exclusive of the actual cost of constructing and financing  
7           improvements, that are directly related to the creation and implementation of  
8           the project, including reimbursement of sums previously advanced by the  
9           municipality for those purposes. Related costs may not include direct  
10           municipal expenses such as departmental or personnel costs.

11           (b) Pilot Program. Beginning January 1, 2021 and ending December 31,  
12           2026, the Vermont Economic Progress Council is authorized to approve not  
13           more than 15 tax increment financing projects, provided that there shall be not  
14           more than one project per municipality and not more than five projects  
15           approved per year.

16           (c) General authority. Under the pilot program established in subsection  
17           (b) of this section, a municipality, upon approval of its legislative body, may  
18           apply to the Vermont Economic Progress Council pursuant to the approval  
19           process set forth in subsection (h) of this section to use tax increment financing  
20           for an individual project located within or serving one or more active  
21           designations approved by the Vermont Downtown Board under 24 V.S.A.

1 chapter 76A or located within an industrial park as defined in 10 V.S.A.  
2 § 212(7).

3 (d) Eligibility.

4 (1) A municipality is only authorized to apply for a project under this  
5 section if the project will serve one or more active designations approved by  
6 the Vermont Downtown Development Board under 24 V.S.A. chapter 76A or  
7 located within an industrial park as defined in 10 V.S.A. § 212(7).

8 (2) A municipality with an approved tax increment financing district as  
9 set forth in 24 V.S.A. 1892(d) is not authorized to apply for a project under this  
10 section.

11 (e) Incurring indebtedness.

12 (1) A municipality approved under the process set forth in subsection (h)  
13 of this section may incur indebtedness against revenues to provide funding to  
14 pay for improvements and related costs for tax increment financing project  
15 development.

16 (2) Notwithstanding any provision of any municipal charter, the  
17 municipality shall only have one authorizing vote to incur debt through one  
18 instance of borrowing to finance or otherwise pay for the tax increment  
19 financing project improvements and related costs. The municipality shall be  
20 authorized to incur indebtedness only after the legal voters of the municipality,  
21 by a majority vote of all voters present and voting on the question at a special

1 or annual municipal meeting duly warned for the purpose, authorize the  
2 legislative body to pledge the credit of the municipality, borrow, or otherwise  
3 secure the debt for the specific purposes so warned.

4 (3) Any indebtedness shall be incurred within three years from the date  
5 of approval by the Vermont Economic Progress Council, unless the Vermont  
6 Economic Progress Council grants an extension of an additional three years  
7 pursuant to the substantial change process set forth in the 2015 TIF Rule;  
8 provided, however, that an updated plan is submitted prior to the three-year  
9 termination date of the project.

10 (f) Original Taxable Value. As of the date the project is approved by the  
11 Vermont Economic Progress Council, the lister or assessor for the municipality  
12 shall certify the original taxable value and shall certify to the legislative body  
13 in each year thereafter during the life of the project the amount by which the  
14 total valuation as determined in accordance with 32 V.S.A. chapter 129 of all  
15 taxable real property located within the project has increased or decreased  
16 relative to the original taxable value.

17 (g) Tax increments.

18 (1) In each year following the approval of the project, the lister or  
19 assessor shall include no more than the original taxable value of the real  
20 property in the assessed valuation upon which the treasurer computes the rates  
21 of all taxes levied by the municipality and every other taxing district in which

1 the project is situated, but the treasurer shall extend all rates so determined  
2 against the entire assessed valuation of real property for that year. In each year  
3 for which the assessed valuation exceeds the original taxable value, the  
4 municipality shall hold apart, rather than remit to the taxing districts, that  
5 proportion of all taxes paid that year on the real property within the project  
6 which the excess valuation bears to the total assessed valuation. The amount  
7 held apart each year is the “tax increment” for that year. No more than the  
8 percentages established pursuant to subsection (i) of this section of the  
9 municipal and State education tax increments received with respect to the  
10 project and committed for the payment for financing for improvements and  
11 related costs shall be segregated by the municipality in a special tax increment  
12 financing project account and in its official books and records until all capital  
13 indebtedness of the project has been fully paid. The final payment shall be  
14 reported to the treasurer, who shall thereafter include the entire assessed  
15 valuation of the project in the assessed valuations upon which municipal and  
16 other tax rates are computed and extended and thereafter no taxes from the  
17 project shall be deposited in the project’s tax increment financing account.

18 (2) Notwithstanding any charter provision or other provision, all  
19 property taxes assessed within a project shall be subject to the provision of  
20 subdivision (1) of this section. Special assessments levied under 24 V.S.A.  
21 chapters 76A or 87 or under a municipal charter shall not be considered

1 property taxes for the purpose of this section if the proceeds are used  
2 exclusively for operating expenses related to properties within the project and  
3 not for improvements within the district, as defined in subdivision (a)(3) of this  
4 section.

5 (3) Amounts held apart under subdivision (1) of this subsection (g) shall  
6 only be used for financing and related costs as defined in subsection (a) of this  
7 section.

8 (h) Approval process. The Vermont Economic Progress Council shall only  
9 approve a municipality’s application for a tax increment financing project  
10 development if:

11 (1) the proposed infrastructure improvements and the projected  
12 development or redevelopment are compatible with confirmed municipal and  
13 regional development plans; the project has clear local and regional  
14 significance for employment, housing, or transportation improvements; and

15 (2) the development clearly requires substantial public investment over  
16 and above the normal municipal operating or bonded debt expenditures and the  
17 application meets one of the following four criteria:

18 (A) The development includes new or rehabilitated affordable  
19 housing, as defined in 24 V.S.A. § 4303.

20 (B) The project will affect the remediation and redevelopment of a  
21 brownfield located within the district. As used in this section, “brownfield”

1 means an area in which a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant is or  
2 may be present, and that situation is likely to complicate the expansion,  
3 development, redevelopment, or reuse of the property.

4 (C) The development will include at least one entirely new business  
5 or business operation or expansion of an existing business within the project,  
6 and this business will provide new, quality, full-time jobs that meet or exceed  
7 the prevailing wage for the region as reported by the Department of Labor.

8 (D) The development will enhance transportation by creating  
9 improved traffic patterns and flow or creating or improving public  
10 transportation systems.

11 (i) Use of tax increment.

12 (1) Education property tax increment. For only debt incurred within the  
13 period permitted under subdivision (e)(3) of this section after approval of the  
14 project, up to 70 percent of the education tax increment may be retained for up  
15 to 20 years, beginning with the education tax increment generated the year in  
16 which the first debt incurred for the project financed in whole or in part with  
17 incremental education property tax revenue. Upon incurring the first debt, a  
18 municipality shall notify the Department of Taxes and the Vermont Economic  
19 Progress Council of the beginning of the 20-year retention period of the  
20 education tax increment.

1           (2) Use of the municipal property tax increment. For only debt incurred  
2           within the period permitted under subdivision (e)(3) of this section after  
3           approval of the project, not less than 85 percent of the municipal tax increment  
4           shall be retained to service the debt, beginning the first year in which debt is  
5           incurred, pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection.

6           (3) The Vermont Economic Progress Council shall determine there is a  
7           nexus between the improvement and the expected development and  
8           redevelopment for the project and expected outcomes.

9           (j) Distribution. Of the municipal and education tax increments received in  
10           any tax year that exceed the amounts committed for the payment of the  
11           financing for improvements and related costs for the project, equal portions of  
12           each increment may be retained for the following purposes: prepayment of  
13           principal and interest on the financing, placed in a special account required by  
14           subdivision (g)(1) of this section and used for future financing payments, or  
15           used for defeasance of the financing. Any remaining portion of the excess  
16           municipal tax increment shall be distributed to the city, town, or village  
17           budget, in the proportion that each budget bears to the combined total of the  
18           budgets, unless otherwise negotiated by the city, town, or village, and any  
19           remaining portion of the excess education tax increment shall be distributed to  
20           the Education Fund.

1       (k) Information Reporting. Every municipality with an approved project  
2       pursuant to this section shall:

3           (1) Develop a system, segregated for the project, to identify, collect, and  
4       maintain all data and information necessary to fulfill the reporting  
5       requirements of this section, including performance measures.

6           (2) Throughout the year, as required by events, provide notification to  
7       the Vermont Economic Progress Council and the Department of Taxes  
8       regarding any tax increment financing development project debt obligations,  
9       public votes, or votes by the municipal legislative body immediately following  
10       such obligation or vote on a form prescribed by the Council, including copies  
11       of public notices, agendas, minutes, vote tally, and a copy of the information  
12       provided to the public in accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 1894(i);

13           (3) Annually:

14           (A) Ensure that the tax increment financing project account required  
15       by subdivision (g)(1) is subject to the annual audit prescribed in subsection (m)  
16       of this section. Procedures must include verification of the original taxable  
17       value and annual and total municipal and education tax increments generated,  
18       expenditures for debt and related costs, and current balance.

19           (B) On or before February 15 of each year, on a form prescribed by  
20       the Council, submit an annual report to the Vermont Economic Progress  
21       Council and the Department of Taxes, including the information required by

1 subdivision (2) of this section if not already submitted during the year, all  
2 information required by subdivision (A) of this subdivision (3), and the  
3 information required by 32 V.S.A. § 5404a(i), including performance measures  
4 and any other information required by the Council or the Department of Taxes.

5 (l) Annual report. The Vermont Economic Progress Council and the  
6 Department of Taxes shall submit an annual report to the Senate Committees  
7 on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs and on Finance and  
8 the House Committees on Commerce and Economic Development and on  
9 Ways and Means on or before April 1 each year. The report shall include the  
10 date of approval, a description of the project, the original taxable value of the  
11 property subject to the project development, the scope and value of projected  
12 and actual improvements and developments, projected and actual incremental  
13 revenue amounts, and division of the increment revenue between project debt,  
14 the Education Fund, the special account required by subdivision (g)(1) and the  
15 municipal General Fund, projected and actual financing, and a set of  
16 performance measures developed by the Vermont Economic Progress Council,  
17 which may include outcomes related to the criteria for which the municipality  
18 applied and the amount of infrastructure work performed by Vermont firms.

19 (m) Audit; financial reports. Annually, until the year following the end of  
20 the period for retention of education tax increment, a municipality with an  
21 approved project under this section shall:

1           (1) by January 1, submit an annual report to the Vermont Economic  
2           Progress Council, which shall provide sufficient information for the Vermont  
3           Economic Progress Council to prepare its report required by subsection (i) of  
4           this section; and

5           (2) by April 1, ensure that the project is subject to the annual audit  
6           prescribed in 24 V.S.A. §§ 1681 or 1690. In the event that the audit is only  
7           subject to the audit under 24 V.S.A. § 1681, the Vermont Economic Progress  
8           Council shall ensure a process is in place to subject the project to an  
9           independent audit. Procedures for the audit must include verification of the  
10           original taxable value and annual and total municipal and education tax  
11           increments generated, expenditures for debt and related costs, and current  
12           balance.

13           (n) Authority to issue decisions.

14           (1) The Secretary of Commerce and Community Development, after  
15           reasonable notice to a municipality and an opportunity for a hearing, is  
16           authorized to issue decisions to a municipality on questions and inquiries  
17           concerning the administration of projects, statutes, rules, noncompliance with  
18           this section, and any instances of noncompliance identified in audit reports  
19           conducted pursuant to subsection (m) of this section.

20           (2) The Vermont Economic Progress Council shall prepare  
21           recommendations for the Secretary prior to the issuance of a decision. As

1 appropriate, the Council may prepare such recommendations in consultation  
2 with the Commissioner of Taxes, the Attorney General, and the State  
3 Treasurer. In preparing recommendations, the Council shall provide a  
4 municipality with a reasonable opportunity to submit written information in  
5 support of its position. The Secretary shall review the recommendations of the  
6 Council and issue a final written decision on each matter within 60 days of the  
7 receipt of the recommendations. The Secretary may permit an appeal to be  
8 taken by any party to a Superior Court for determination of questions of law in  
9 the same manner as the Supreme Court may by rule provide for appeals before  
10 final judgment from a Superior Court before issuing a final decision.

11 (o) The Vermont Economic Progress Council is authorized to adopt  
12 policies that are consistent with the 2015 TIF Rule to implement this section.

13 \* \* \* Vermont Employment Growth Incentive Pilot Program \* \* \*

14 Sec. 6. 32 V.S.A. § 3343 is added to read:

15 § 3343. CAPITAL INVESTMENT CONVERTIBLE LOAN PROGRAM

16 (a) Creation. Within the Vermont Employment Growth Incentive Program  
17 there is created a Capital Investment Convertible Loan Program, the purpose of  
18 which is to offer an incentive to smaller businesses in the form of a convertible  
19 loan in order to upgrade facilities, machinery, and equipment and to increase  
20 total payroll.

1        (b) Requirements. Notwithstanding any provision of this chapter to the  
2        contrary:

3            (1) A business with 30 or fewer employees, which for purposes of this  
4        section includes the employees of any other business under common control,  
5        may apply for an incentive in the form of a convertible loan by submitting an  
6        application to the Council in the form and with the information the Council  
7        requires.

8            (2) For purposes of this section:

9            (A) An award period is three years.

10          (B) A qualifying job may include an existing position at the business  
11        that otherwise meets the definition in subdivision 3331(9) of this title.

12          (C) An application shall include a payroll performance requirement  
13        and a capital investment performance requirement.

14          (D) A business may participate in either the incentive program or the  
15        convertible loan program and shall not participate in both simultaneously,  
16        provided that a business that otherwise qualifies for an enhanced incentive  
17        under sections 3334 or 3335 of this title may receive the benefits of the  
18        enhancement.

19          (3) If the Council approves the application for an award, the Council  
20        shall recommend the application to the Vermont Economic Development  
21        Authority and the business must submit a loan application to the Authority for

1 its review and approval pursuant to underwriting standards it adopts for that  
2 purpose.

3 (4)(A) If the Authority approves the loan application, notwithstanding  
4 any provision of 10 V.S.A. chapter 12 to the contrary, it shall issue a loan up to  
5 the total value of the incentives approved for the award period.

6 (B) The business is required to make monthly, interest-only payments  
7 during the award period.

8 (C) The interest rate shall not exceed one percent.

9 (5) If the Authority does not approve the loan application or approves a  
10 loan for less than the total value of the incentives, the business may withdraw  
11 its loan application and return to the Council to amend or withdraw its  
12 application.

13 (6) A loan shall convert to a grant at the end of the award period if the  
14 business remains in good standing on the loan and:

15 (A) the Authority verifies that the business meets or exceeds its  
16 capital investment requirement; and

17 (B) the Department of Taxes verifies to the Authority that the  
18 business meets or exceeds its payroll performance requirement.

19 (7) If the business satisfies the criteria in subdivision (5) of this  
20 subsection, the Department shall pay to the Authority the balance of the loan  
21 principal.

1           (8) If the business meets its payroll performance requirement, but does  
2           not meet its capital investment requirement:

3                   (A) a percentage of the loan shall convert to a grant equal to the  
4                   percentage of the capital investment the business made during the award period  
5                   relative to the capital investment performance requirement;

6                   (B) the Department shall pay to the Authority an amount equal to the  
7                   amount converted; and

8                   (C) the business shall pay the balance of the principal and interest on  
9                   terms specified in the loan agreement.

10           (9) If the business does not meet its payroll performance requirement,  
11           the loan does not convert and the business shall pay the balance of the  
12           principal and interest on terms specified in the loan agreement.

13           (c) Limitations.

14                   (1) An incentive approved pursuant to this section shall not exceed  
15                   \$150,000.

16                   (2) Within the annual program cap established in section 3342 of this  
17                   title, the Council may approve not more than \$1.5 million in incentives  
18                   pursuant to this section in each calendar year.

19           Sec. 7. IMPLEMENTATION OF VEGI PILOT PROGRAMS; REPORT;  
20           STUDY; SUNSET

1       (a) The Vermont Economic Progress Council, the Department of Taxes,  
2       and the Vermont Economic Development Authority shall collaborate to adopt  
3       written policies and procedures governing the implementation of 32 V.S.A. §  
4       3343, which shall include policies and procedures for determining background  
5       growth rates in payroll.

6       (b) The Council shall not accept or approve an application pursuant to 32  
7       V.S.A. § 3343 after December 31, 2024.

8       (c) On or before January 15, 2021 and through the duration of the program,  
9       the Council shall report to the House Committees on Commerce and Economic  
10       Development and on Ways and Means and to the Senate Committees on  
11       Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs and on Finance, as  
12       follows:

13           (1) The Council shall provide the written policies and procedures  
14           adopted pursuant to subsection (a) of this section.

15           (2) The Council shall provide information concerning the  
16           implementation and effectiveness of 32 V.S.A. § 3343, including information  
17           on the number and status of applications, projected fiscal benefit to the State,  
18           and actual fiscal benefit to the State realized.

19           (3) The Council, in coordination with the Agency of Commerce and  
20           Community Development, shall provide recommendations concerning the

1 design and implementation of an additional incentive program within the  
2 VEGI program, the purpose of which is:

3 (A) to incentivize large, anchor businesses throughout Vermont to  
4 make significant capital investments in their Vermont facilities; and

5 (B) appropriately recognize and account for:

6 (i) the economic benefits that large employers currently provide,  
7 particularly in rural areas of the State;

8 (ii) the negative impacts that occur when such employers diminish  
9 their presence or withdraw from the State; and

10 (iii) the economic benefits to the State that arise from significant  
11 capital investments and accompanying growth in payroll and jobs at existing  
12 facilities.

13 Sec. 8. VERMONT EMPLOYMENT GROWTH INCENTIVE; STUDY

14 (a) On or before January 15, 2021, the Vermont Economic Progress  
15 Council shall provide to the House Committees on Commerce and Economic  
16 Development and on Ways and Means and to the Senate Committees on  
17 Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs and on Finance a report  
18 based on an independent third-party review of the Vermont Employment  
19 Growth Incentive Program that addresses:

20 (1) the internal controls and methods used to evaluate whether the  
21 program is working as intended;

1           (2) the procedures used to select, vet, and approve participants and  
2 projects;

3           (3) the controls and due diligence surrounding the application of the  
4 “but for” test;

5           (4) recommendations on possible alternatives to the “but for” test that  
6 may be used to qualify a business to participate in the Program;

7           (5) the specific outcomes of the Program in each year, including the net  
8 revenue gain to the State and the net increase in jobs, payroll, and capital  
9 investment;

10           (6) the procedures and controls for measuring and verifying those  
11 Program outcomes; and

12           (7) any other issues that arise during the independent review of the  
13 Program.

14                           \* \* \* Downtown and Village Center Tax Credit \* \* \*

15           Sec. 9. 32 V.S.A. § 5930ee is amended to read:

16           § 5930ee. LIMITATIONS

17           Beginning in fiscal year 2010 and thereafter, the State Board may award tax  
18 credits to all qualified applicants under this subchapter, provided that:

19           (1) the total amount of tax credits awarded annually, together with sales  
20 tax reallocated under section 9819 of this title, does not exceed ~~\$2,600,000.00~~  
21 \$4,000,000.00;

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\* \* \* Appropriations \* \* \*

Sec. 10. APPROPRIATIONS

In fiscal year 2021 the following amounts are appropriated from the General Fund as follows:

(1) \$1,000,000 to the Secretary of State to complete the work of the steering committee created in 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 196, Sec. 1, as amended by 2019 Acts and Resolves No. 80, Sec. 13, to design and implement a one-stop business portal for businesses, entrepreneurs, and citizens to provide information about starting and operating a business in Vermont.

(2) \$600,000 to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development to support Vermont businesses seeking to participate in the federal Small Business Innovation Research program:

(A) \$200,000 to contract with one or more technical service providers to assist businesses in applying for grants; and

(B) \$400,000 to provide State-funded matching grants of not more than 50 percent of a federal SBIR Phase I or II grant, not to exceed \$50,000.00.

(3) \$250,000 to the Department of Tourism and Marketing for tourism marketing, economic development marketing, and to promote outdoor recreation, with priority given to economic development marketing.

