

No. 118. An act relating to forest integrity.

(S.100)

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

Sec. 1. FINDINGS

The General Assembly finds:

(1) Vermont's forests are a unique resource that provides habitat for wildlife, a renewable resource for human use, jobs for Vermonters in timber and other forest-related industries, and economic development through a productive forest products industry.

(2) Large areas of contiguous forest are essential for quality wildlife habitat, to preserve Vermont's scenic qualities, to implement best practices in forest management, and to ensure the continued economic productivity of Vermont's diverse forest products industry.

(3) The division of forests into lots for house sites or other construction fragments Vermont's forests and reduces their value as wildlife habitat, for forest industries, and to Vermont's tourist economy.

Sec. 2. REPORT; FOREST FRAGMENTATION IN VERMONT

On or before January 15, 2015, the Commissioner of the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation shall submit to the House and Senate Committees on Natural Resources and Energy and the House Committee on Fish, Wildlife, and Water Resources a report assessing the current and projected effects of fragmentation on Vermont's forestlands, and providing recommendations, including regulatory and nonregulatory mechanisms, and

legislation if appropriate, for how to best protect the integrity of Vermont's forestlands and preserve large blocks of contiguous forestland.

Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2014.

Date Governor signed bill: May 6, 2014