

1 S.312

2 Introduced by Committee on Institutions

3 Date:

4 Subject: Agency of Natural Resources; Salisbury fish hatchery; continued  
5 operation

6 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to provide  
7 funding to continue operating the Salisbury fish hatchery in fiscal year 2025, to  
8 declare the General Assembly's intent that the State's fish stocking capacity be  
9 maintained by continuing to operate the Salisbury fish hatchery after 2027 or  
10 to replace its fish stocking capacity, and to require the Agency of Natural  
11 Resources to provide annual reports through 2027 on the progress of efforts  
12 made to continue the operation of the hatchery or to replace its fish stocking  
13 capacity.

14 An act relating to the Salisbury fish hatchery

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

16 Sec. 1. LEGISLATIVE INTENT; SALISBURY FISH HATCHERY

17 It is the intent of the General Assembly that:

18 (1) The State shall maintain or increase its current fish stocking  
19 capacity.

1           (2) To the extent practicable, the Salisbury fish hatchery shall, subject to  
2           annual appropriations, continue operating through December 31, 2027.

3           (3) The Agency of Natural Resources shall examine potential options  
4           for continuing the operation of the Salisbury fish hatchery after fiscal year  
5           2027, including maintaining any necessary permits.

6           (4) The Agency of Natural Resources shall examine options for  
7           maintaining or increasing the State's current fish stocking following the  
8           potential closure of the Salisbury fish hatchery, including:

9                   (A) replacing the stocking capacity of the Salisbury fish hatchery  
10                  with increased stocking capacity at one or more State-operated or federally  
11                  operated fish hatcheries;

12                   (B) transferring fish broodstock from the Salisbury hatchery to other  
13                  State fish hatcheries;

14                   (C) establishing additional egg production at other State fish  
15                  hatcheries to compensate for any lost egg production; and

16                   (D) utilizing other innovative or more cost-effective approaches for  
17                  replacing any lost stocking capacity.

18           (5) The Agency of Natural Resources shall examine options for limiting  
19           any negative economic impact from the potential closure of the Salisbury fish  
20           hatchery, including impacts from reduced fish stocking on fishing and tourism,  
21           and impacts from the loss of staff positions at the Salisbury fish hatchery.

1           (6) The Salisbury fish hatchery shall not close without prior approval of  
2           the General Assembly, which shall be provided if:

3                   (A) the hatchery is unable to secure the necessary permits to continue  
4           operating after December 31, 2027; or

5                   (B) the stocking capacity of the hatchery can be replaced in a manner  
6           that is more cost-effective than the up-front and operating costs of the capital  
7           improvements necessary for the hatchery to obtain the necessary permits to  
8           continue operating after December 31, 2027.

9           Sec. 2. SALISBURY FISH HATCHERY; ANNUAL REPORT

10           On or before January 15 of 2025, 2026, and 2027, the Secretary of Natural  
11           Resources shall submit a written report to the Senate Committees on  
12           Institutions and on Natural Resources and Energy and the House Committees  
13           on Corrections and Institutions and on Environment and Energy regarding  
14           efforts undertaken and progress made with respect to sustaining the fish  
15           production and stocking capacity of Vermont's State-operated fish hatcheries,  
16           including:

17                   (1) efforts to maintain permits necessary to continue operating the  
18           Salisbury fish hatchery after December 31, 2027;

19                   (2) the potential for transferring the stocking capacity of the Salisbury  
20           fish hatchery to one or more State-operated or federally operated fish  
21           hatcheries, including estimated costs;

1           (3) the potential for transferring the fish broodstock of the Salisbury fish  
2           hatchery to one or more State-operated fish hatcheries for the purpose of  
3           replacing the Salisbury fish hatchery’s egg production, including estimated  
4           costs;

5           (4) the potential to employ innovative or more cost-effective approaches  
6           than those identified pursuant to subdivisions (1)–(3) of this section to replace  
7           any lost stocking capacity due to the closure of the Salisbury fish hatchery,  
8           including estimated costs; and

9           (5) options for limiting negative economic impact of the potential  
10          closure of the Salisbury fish hatchery after December 31, 2027, including  
11          impacts from reduced fish stocking on fishing and tourism, and impacts from  
12          the loss of staff positions at the Salisbury fish hatchery.

13          Sec. 3. APPROPRIATION

14          In addition to other monies appropriated to the Agency of Natural  
15          Resources in fiscal year 2025, the amount of \$550,000.00 is appropriated from  
16          the General Fund for purposes of operating the Salisbury fish hatchery during  
17          fiscal year 2025.

18          Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

19          This act shall take effect on July 1, 2024.