

Bulletin & Legislative Platform

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TOP ISSUES IN 1999:

A highlight of VNRC's top priorities for the 1999 Legislative Session.

ACT 250

- Strengthen Act 250 in several areas such as: requiring master plans for large-scale, multi-year, phased development projects like ski area expansion; enabling review of the cumulative impacts of these large-scale developments; creating a mechanism for reviewing projects whose impacts cross over into more than one district; granting Supreme Court appeal rights to all parties in Act 250 proceedings; and repealing the slate quarry exemption.

TRANSPORTATION

- Target increased funding for public transportation and maintaining what is already in place rather than spending on new highway projects like the Circ Highway.

WATER

- Require unlicensed hydroelectric power facilities to comply with the Vermont Water Quality Standards.

CITIZEN ENFORCEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS

- Vermont should follow the lead of many states and the federal government and allow citizens to take polluters to court to enforce the laws that are already on the books.

ENERGY

- In the process of electric utility industry restructuring, it is imperative to maintain the benefits of the current regulated system, such as environmental protection, demand side management, development of renewable energy resources, consumer protection, and low-income assistance.

FORESTS

- Through state appropriations, assist in the land protection strategy for the Champion International lands in the Northeast Kingdom included in the historic purchase agreement brokered by The Conservation Fund.
- Stand firm on the "heavy cutting" law passed in 1997.

TAX SHIFTING

- Consider revenue-neutral tax shifting proposals like the Clean Car Incentive Program to benefit the environment and the economy.

SPRAWL / LAND USE

- Restore full funding for municipal and regional planning.
- To counter sprawl, enable the creation of growth centers in which development is supported and state funding for infrastructure is targeted. Couple this with permanent protection of land and the curtailing of state infrastructure investment outside the growth center.



FUNDING FOR THE AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES (ANR)

- Restore sufficient funding for ANR to carry out its statutory responsibilities.

More detailed summaries begin on page 2