



A Brief Overview of the 2018 Legislative Session and What We're Watching:

Right to Forestry – S.101. This bill would create protection from nuisance lawsuits for a wide variety of forestry operations and production practices (similar to protections afforded to farmers by the Right to Farm law).

Ag Enterprise Bill – H.663. The intention is to create some statewide consistency in the regulation of accessory on-farm businesses with the goal being to promote farm viability and flexibility to accommodate future innovation.

Hemp Pilot Program – S.286. This bill would direct the VT Agency of Ag, Food & Markets to establish a pilot research program for the production, processing and marketing of industrial hemp that is compliant with the requirements of the 2014 federal Farm Bill. Offers tremendous potential to help small-scale farmers get a “piece of the pie” as various aspects of hemp production (especially the lucrative CBD oil industry) develop.

Right to Repair Bill – S.180. This bill would offer protection from onerous service contracts and warranties and restrictions of people’s ability to repair themselves, or have repaired by service people of their choice, everything from household appliances to cell phones to tractors.

Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs) Implementation. There are a number of bills related to the RAPs; one proposes to delay opening the RAPs rules for amendment until 2022 (S.255), another relates to the Tile Drainage Rules, another proposes that Nutrient Management plans be public records (S.218), and the Ag Enterprise bill requires compliance with the RAPs (H.663). It could be an emerging trend that compliance with the RAPs is a cornerstone of other pieces of policy.

Funding Clean Up of State Waters – S.260 & H.564. These bills create an independent “Clean Water Authority” to both receive and disburse monies for water quality clean up. These bills are quite complex and propose to use a “per parcel fee” as the primary source of funding. In the current versions, that fee is set a \$40 with a variety of special exemptions.

If you care about any of these issues and want to offer some ideas, share your perspective, stay informed, or lend support to our advocacy, please be in touch:

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