



NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD

10 Baldwin Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05633-3201

To: The Joint Fiscal Committee
From: Diane Snelling, Chair, Natural Resources Board/Act 250
Re: CRF Request
Date: July 24, 2020

Total Amount Requested: \$80,113. The Natural Resources Board (NRB) is tasked with administering Act 250, Vermont’s land use and planning law. The NRB is seeking funding to expedite Covid-19 permitting by digitizing a subset of our permit files, those that are most directly related to Vermont’s emergency response to Covid-19. The NRB would require additional staff to complete the digitization process. The NRB requests funding to hire a qualified Temporary Service Position to perform the functions required to digitize the required records. Costs for the digitization project are estimated as follows:

• Temporary Service Position for 4 months	\$26,925
• Scanning of 99 boxes	\$50,688
• Cost for equipment, supplies and travel expenses	<u>\$ 2,500</u>
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Total Project Cost	\$80,113

Approximate calculations show that it could be possible to scan up to 250,000 new images into our database prior to December 31, 2020.

Response to the Pandemic: The unexpected onset of the COVID-19 has forced businesses and governmental agencies to adapt to a new normal. Digitizing records will significantly assist development by providing easy online access to the permit history that is necessary to prepare a new permit application without requiring in-person contact. The NRB will work closely with ACCD and ANR and the development community to identify the best files to scan and target areas where future development is planned.

Urgency of Request: This project will provide a significant benefit to Vermonters by expediting the research involved with drafting Act 250 permit applications by providing substantial additional permit history online. Access to permit history is essential to application process and online access both expedites the process and eliminates the need for in person contact. The earlier the scanning project begins, the sooner permit histories can move online, decreasing the need for in person contact in furtherance of social distancing requirements brought on by the pandemic.

