

## Vermont Current Use Program

I would recommend that this Commission give serious thought to redefining the State Current Use program. It is a nightmare to administer, both at the State, Town and owner level. It also gives a much higher deduction in value to the smaller parcels as it is based on a use value that does not recognize the protection value of the enrolled portion to the 2 acre housesite.

Please consider the following:

- 1.) Change the concept of “owner” enrollment to “parcel” enrollment.
- 2.) Change the definition of “parcel” from contiguous to “highest and best use” with the owner designating the parcel to be enrolled. The parcel must be legally defined by deed.
- 3.) Have the “use value” of the enrolled portion of a “parcel” be based on a % of the assessed value.
- 4.) Have every parcel be taxed on 10 acres and have any land over 10 acres to be eligible for enrollment.
- 5.) Have the “enrolled portion” be taxed at the % of its assessed value as follows:
  - a.) 10% of its assessed value if owned by a qualified farmer with eligible farm buildings also taxed at 10% of assessed value.
  - b.) Woodland over 25 acres and under an approved forest management plan to be assessed at 10% of its assessed value.
  - c.) All other land enrolled to be assessed at 25% of its assessed value if not posted.
  - d.) Enrolled land that is posted to be assessed at 25% if under an approved forest management plan and at 40% if not under an approved forest management plan.
- 6.) No longer have a “perpetual lien” on the enrolled land or have a 10% penalty assessed to the owner when developed.
- 7.) Should the parcel be developed, it will be removed from the program, pay taxes at its full assessed value for the next 5 years, and not be eligible for re-enrollment until the 6<sup>th</sup> year after the development.

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The above would simplify the Current Use program and make it fairer for all tax payers. It would be easier to administer and bring better clarity to the owner of the parcel. It would also lower the amount of reimbursement that the State now gives to towns out of the Education Fund.