



# VERMONT LEGISLATIVE Joint Fiscal Office

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## Fiscal Note

February 26, 2026

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### **H.674 – An act relating to the creation of the Vermont Sister State Program**

**As recommended by the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, Draft 2.2<sup>1i</sup>**

#### **Bill Summary**

**T**his bill would create the Vermont Sister State Program within the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD). The bill would also create a Sister State Program Committee to oversee the Program and repeal the Vermont-Ireland Trade Commission.

***The Sister State Program Committee is expected to cost \$9,500 annually.***

#### **Fiscal Impact**

Members of the Committee would be entitled to per diem compensation and expense reimbursement for not more than eight meetings per year, at an estimated cost of approximately \$9,500 to ACCD.

#### **Background and Details**

The stated purpose of the proposed Vermont Sister State Program is to strengthen Vermont's international engagement and to foster mutually beneficial relationships with national and subnational governments abroad, with a goal of promoting cultural exchange, economic development, educational cooperation, and diplomatic collaboration.

The Program would be administered by ACCD but overseen by a nine-member Sister State Program Committee comprised of the following:

- the Secretary of Commerce and Community Development or designee;
- one member of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House;
- one member of the Senate, appointed by the Committee on Committees;
- the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Vermont Council on World Affairs or designee;
- the Vermont Adjutant General or designee;
- the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Vermont Arts Council or designee;

<sup>1</sup> *The Joint Fiscal Office (JFO) is a nonpartisan legislative office dedicated to producing unbiased fiscal analysis – this fiscal note is meant to provide information for legislative consideration, not to provide policy recommendations.*

- one member with expertise in cultural exchange or in Peace Corps operations, appointed by the Governor;
- one member representing a private institution of higher education, appointed by the Committee on Committees; and
- one member representing a public institution of higher education, appointed by the Speaker of the House.

Members of the Committee would generally serve two-year terms and meet at least once quarterly. The latter three members listed above would be appointed to initial three-year terms to establish staggered terms on the Committee. Members may be reappointed.

ACCD would be charged with developing an application process in consultation with the Committee. The Committee would review these applications and make recommendations to the Governor. The Governor would have sole authority to issue final approval or disapproval of a Sister State Program application. ACCD would then finalize a memorandum of understanding between the State of Vermont and the Sister State Program applicant.

The Committee would be required to submit an annual report by January 15 to the Governor and legislative committees.

Legislative members of the Committee who meet during adjournment of the General Assembly, and other members of the Committee, would be entitled to per diem compensation and expense reimbursement for not more than eight meetings per year. These costs, assuming 8 meetings, would be approximately \$9,500 to the ACCD budget annually.

Implementation would ultimately require the staff and administrative resources of ACCD, but any additional costs will depend, to some extent, on the scale of the program's implementation.

Repealing the Vermont-Ireland Trade Commission, which was created by Act 65 (2025), is not expected to have a significant fiscal impact.

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<sup>i</sup> The full fiscal note history is available on the fiscal tab of the bill page on the General Assembly website and can be pulled up through a bill number search on the JFO page.