



VERMONT LEGISLATIVE  
**Joint Fiscal Office**

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## Fiscal Note

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# **S.148 (Draft 5.1) An act relating to environmental justice in Vermont – As recommended by the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy**

### URL for bill:

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/WorkGroups/Senate%20Natural%20Resources/Bills/S.148/Drafts,%20Amendments,%20and%20Legal%20Documents/S.148~Ellen%20Czajkowski~%20Draft%205.1%20As%20Recommended,%202-25-2022~2-25-2022.pdf>

## Bill Summary

**T**his bill would establish an environmental justice policy for the State of Vermont, which would require State agencies to have new environmental justice related responsibilities, establish the creation of a State environmental justice mapping tool, and establish a 17-member Advisory Council on Environmental Justice.

## Fiscal impact

**In Fiscal Year 2023, this bill appropriates \$3 million from the General Fund.** This appropriation would be directed to hire new FTE positions, develop the environmental justice mapping tool, and provide per diem payments.<sup>1</sup>

## Background and details

As drafted, JFO is not able to analyze further fiscal impact of this bill beyond its appropriations to State agencies without further information and details either from the bill or state agencies.

### *Creation of new FTE positions*

This bill would create 10 permanent exempt positions at the Agency of Natural Resources, six permanent exempt positions at the Natural resources Board, 1.5 permanent exempt positions at the Natural resources Board, and 2.5 permanent exempt positions at the Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

### *Environmental justice mapping tool*

The bill would require the development and maintenance of an environmental justice mapping tool. This

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<sup>1</sup> Specific appropriations to specific agencies are not currently drafted in the bill.

mapping tool is to be maintained by the Agency of Natural Resources.

*Per diem payments*

The bill establishes an Advisory Council that will be granted per diems. The compensation for this Council is not defined in the bill. For most state public boards and commissions, members receive a per diem of \$50 per day. However, the bill does not specify the level of per diems so JFO is unable to estimate the precise impact on State resources.

*Other costs*

The bill also creates new responsibilities for state agencies to incorporate environmental justice considerations in their work. This includes that each State agency shall create and adopt a community engagement plan, submit annual summaries regarding environmental justice complaints, and may be required to direct certain investments towards environmental justice populations. The exact responsibilities and costs for each agency are unclear. As such, JFO is unable to identify precisely what their funding needs will be to administer those responsibilities. If agencies require additional resources to implement the responsibilities laid out in the bill, their additional resource needs would need to be approved as part of a future fiscal year budget process.