

PHILIP B. SCOTT
GOVERNOR



State of Vermont
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

June 2, 2022

The Honorable BetsyAnn Wrask
Clerk of the Vermont House of Representatives
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633

Dear Ms. Wrask:

Pursuant to Chapter II, Section 11 of the Vermont Constitution, I am returning H.606, *An act relating to community resilience and biodiversity protection*, without my signature.

Vermont has a long history of effective land conservation that has significantly contributed to the state's vibrant, resilient working landscape of farms and forests, vast natural areas, and world class opportunities for outdoor recreation. This is a result of flexible and innovative tools like our current use program and the payment-for-ecosystem-services model. These programs are critical to achieving our conservation priorities because they combine conservation planning with incentives – making it more attractive and affordable for Vermont families to keep and conserve their land, farms and forests.

Over the course of the legislative session, the Agency of Natural Resources testified multiple times against this bill. Among the objections, the Agency pointed to the conservation goals established in H.606 are unnecessarily tied to – and unreasonably limited to – permanent protection. The Agency has repeatedly said that permanent preservation has not been, and cannot be, the state's exclusive conservation tool and this bill, intentional or not, would diminish the existing and successful conservation tools we have.

Based on the objections outlined above, I am returning this legislation without my signature pursuant to Chapter II, Section 11 of the Vermont Constitution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Philip B. Scott", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Philip B. Scott
Governor

PBS/kp