

From: vtconservation@googlegroups.com <vtconservation@googlegroups.com> **On Behalf Of** Laura Hill-Eubanks

Sent: Wednesday, November 12, 2025 11:50 AM

To: vtconservation@googlegroups.com

Cc: Laura Hill-Eubanks <lhilleub@gmail.com>

Subject: Submit Comments on new Wetlands Rules Re: [AVCC] Executive Order 06-25

Hello AVCC members,

As explained previously in the emails below, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) intends to amend the state Wetlands Rules to remove some protections for wetlands, as ordered by the Governor. The rules would allow housing to be built in wetlands and their buffers in certain areas. The ANR is now in the process of taking public comments on the proposed rules before the rules can be finalized. For the reasons stated in my previous email (below), please consider submitting comments in opposition to these changes to the Wetlands Rules.

Comments on the proposed changes to the rules can be submitted by 1) email; 2) in person (or virtually) at the scheduled public hearing. As provided by the Wetlands Program staff, the information on the proposed rules and submitting comments is below:

The proposed rules and materials for review are on the Wetlands Rulemaking site here: <https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/wetlands/wetlands-rulemaking>

The information about participation and submitting comments is here:

- Monday, December 15th, 2025 at 5pm, 1st Floor Conference Room, 100 Mineral Street, Springfield, VT or Virtual. [Register Here](#).
- Tuesday December 16th, 2025 at 1pm, Dewey 1st Floor Conference Room, 1 National Life Drive, Montpelier, VT or Virtual. [Register Here](#).

You do not need to attend a hearing to provide comments. Written comments will be accepted until January 14, 2026 and should be sent to WetlandsRulemakingComment@vermont.gov and misty.sinsigalli@vermont.gov.

I think it's important to inform others of the information as well. I don't believe the public is fully aware of these issues.

I intend to submit written comments (similar to those below), and will send a copy to the AVCC group. I will also plan to attend the public hearing in Montpelier.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

All the best—
Laura

*Laura Hill-Eubanks
Northfield, VT
802-485-6277*

On Oct 20, 2025, at 5:23 PM, Laura Hill-Eubanks <lhilleub@gmail.com> wrote:

Good afternoon AVCC members,

In response to this morning's email from the Vermont state Wetlands Program managers regarding new state wetland rules:

I urge members of the AVCC and Vermont Conservation Commissions to OPPOSE changes to the Vermont wetland rules as described in the Governor's Executive Order (referenced in the state's email).

The proposed changes to the state wetlands rules would, in certain areas, reduce the buffer zones around Class II wetlands: decreasing the buffer zone requirement from the current 50 feet, down to 25 feet. This generally means that development in those areas would no longer be prohibited within 50 feet of a Class II wetland. The protected area would be only 25 feet.

In addition, the Executive Order means that wetlands that have not yet been mapped on the state wetlands maps will no longer be protected. Under the current rules, any wetlands that meet the criteria for a Class I or Class II wetland are considered protected—mapped or not. [See <https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/wetlands/wetland-maps>] The new rules will mean that many wetlands could now lose protections from development. A significant number of wetlands have already been lost to development. We cannot afford to lose more.

Wetlands are extremely valuable natural resources that provide a number of important functions: flood control, ground water recharge and discharge, water quality improvement, shoreline stabilization, fish and wildlife habitat, recreational and educational opportunities, and aesthetic values. Development closer to wetlands can have negative impacts on the wetlands and its functions—such as increased runoff, sedimentation, introduction of pollutants, diversion of water supply, introduction of invasive and exotic species, and reduced populations of wetland-dependent species. The closer to the wetland that development occurs, the greater the impacts.

The state's own website explains the importance of wetlands and adequate wetland buffer zones.

[See: "Wetlands Functions and Values" at <https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/wetlands/functions>;

and "Bountiful Benefits of Wetland Buffers" at https://www.google.com/urlsa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/documents/wl_BountifulBenefitsOfWetlandBuffers.pdf

In order to increase housing development, the Scott administration has chosen to reduce environmental protections for one of our most valuable resources: wetlands. I understand the need to improve access to housing for Vermonters, but this particular path to achieve that goal seems ill-conceived and extremely short-sighted. The function that wetlands provide in helping to prevent flood impacts seems justification alone to protect them for the increased safety of Vermonters—especially since we are seeing more flooding due to climate change. Putting housing in what are essentially wet areas to begin with (wetlands), and by doing so, increasing stormwater runoff due to new impervious surfaces (housing units and associated driveways, etc.), seems a risky and not very smart proposal.

Please consider telling the state wetlands managers (through the contact information in their email) that you oppose the plan to lessen protections for Vermont's wetlands. There will soon be a state "rulemaking" process to finalize the proposed changes to the wetlands rules. Ask that any comments you send to the wetlands managers be included as comments in opposition to those final changes to the wetlands rules.

All the best,

Laura Hill-Eubanks
Northfield, VT

Note: I am a former member of my town Conservation Commission, a former chair of my town Planning Commission, a former chair of my Regional Planning Commission, and an attorney that has worked in land use and conservation.

On Oct 20, 2025, at 7:20 AM, Courage, Zapata <Zapata.Courage@vermont.gov> wrote:

Happy Monday everyone!

Laura Lapierre, Wetlands Program Manager, has asked that I share this information with you. Thanks for all that you do in your communities.

Have you heard about Executive Order 06-25, "Promoting Housing Construction and Rehabilitation"? This Order includes steps to be taken by the Department of Environmental Conservation with the intent of supporting specific types of housing projects. We are receiving questions about this Order and want to make you aware of what this Order might mean for your town regarding wetland regulations.

[Initial guidance](#) is now available. You can visit the Department of Environmental Conservation's [Executive Order website](#) for updates.

Here are some key points:

- **Current wetland rules still apply.** For now, the [2023 Vermont Wetland Rules](#) remain in effect. Wetlands that aren't shown on maps but meet certain criteria or are next to mapped wetlands are still protected, including their 50-foot buffer zones. Most of the changes mentioned in Section 3.1 of the EO are **not** in effect yet.
- **Rulemaking starts this October.** The Agency will begin the formal process to update the Vermont Wetland Rules in October. The proposed rule amendment will allow certain residential housing projects to proceed without a wetland permit. This process will include an opportunity for public comments.
- **Changes apply only to certain areas.** The wetland regulation changes will apply only in designated residential growth areas, which make up no more than 6% of the land in Vermont. You can use the [online map viewer](#) to see what areas of your town are currently included.
- **Only residential housing projects are eligible.** If the proposed changes are approved, they will apply only to residential housing projects in the designated areas.

Please help share this information with your residents. To learn more about wetland regulation in general, please visit our [Check for Wetlands Website](#).

Cheers,

Zapata

Zapata Courage | District Wetland Ecologist
Addison & Rutland Counties and the Towns of Stockbridge and Rochester of Windsor Co.

The Department of Environmental Conservation supports telework, and there are times when I may be working from another office location or out in the field. I am available to connect by phone and email. I am also available to connect in-person upon request.

Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation
Watershed Management Division | Wetlands Program

Rutland Regional Office
802-490-6179 (cell)
<https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/wetlands>

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