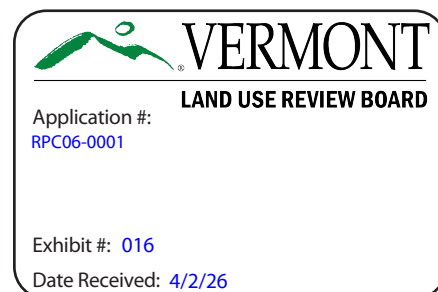


## SECOND SET OF COMMENTS ON MARC'S REGIONAL PLAN

Date: April 2, 2026

To: Alex Weinhagen, Board Member  
Vermont Land Use Review Board

From: Robert Slocum  
Rhoda Moore  
John MacGovern  
Daniel B. Jones  
Chuck Fenton



Subject: Document 006-Appendix B: Tier 1B Memorandum  
Project RPC06-0001 – Mount Ascutney Regional Commission Draft Regional Plan

For the reasons summarized below, we oppose Tier 1B designation at the Windsor prison site. As in our first set of comments submitted on March 18, we focus on the approximately 100-acre area outside of the razor wire fence. In these comments, we neither favor nor oppose Tier 1B designation of the approximately 20-acre area enclosed by the razor wire fence.

### 1. **Protection of Natural Areas**

Tier 1B designation at the prison site would likely harm the adjacent Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the natural resource values that both Act 250 and Act 181 are intended to preserve.

House Bill, H.513, which is now with the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions, would "...require the land outside the fence on the grounds of the Southeast State Correctional Facility, commonly referred to as the "Windsor State Prison," to be transferred to the Department of Fish and Wildlife for inclusion in Windsor Grasslands Wildlife Management Area, except for the existing solar energy generation facility." (See bill attached)

The bill, introduced by Windsor's two representatives, John Bartholomew and Elizabeth Burrows, demonstrates local support for expanding the WMA, thereby protecting wildlife corridors, contiguous blocks of undeveloped land, scenic views, riparian areas, bird habitat, deer wintering areas, and other wildlife. Notably, beavers are moving into the brook running from the WMA onto the prison land. Their lodges are within a few dozen yards of the current prison boundary.

The WMA is also a popular hunting area and tourist destination, particularly for bird watchers. Hunters and tourists spend money that enhances Windsor's economy, and the economy of Vermont. Protecting and adding land to the WMA helps to preserve the value of the WMA to the State of Vermont.

## **2. Local Services**

Housing promoted by Tier 1B designation would place additional unquantified burdens on local services. The prison site is about two miles from the heavily-settled areas of Windsor, increasing the need for additional fire and police protection through more than two miles of a sparsely-settled area.

## **3. Transportation**

The potential adverse impacts of Tier 1B designation at the prison site on local roads are particularly of concern. Many commuters from the site would likely reach Interstate Highway 91 (I91) either by travelling down State Street, past the local elementary and high schools, or via the adjacent town of Hartland. Travel through Hartland would be along Highway 12, which is congested at its intersection with the Harland-Brownsville Road (Hartland Four Corners) and through the center of Hartland (Hartland Three-Corners).

Substantial improvements would likely be needed along County Road, especially at and near its intersection with State Farm Road (the access to the prison site), State Street, Highway 5 and Highway 12. The adverse traffic impacts of a village development on the prison site might not be fully mitigable even with road improvements.

## **4. Distraction from Alternative Housing Strategies**

Developing housing at the prison site would be a distraction from development in the center of Windsor. The need to develop closer to Windsor's downtown area was emphasized by several speakers at LURB's meeting in Windsor on March 20, 2026.

While much of the area closer to Windsor's downtown is in a floodway or a floodplain or has contaminated soil, opportunities for development have not been adequately implemented. In about 2020, a "Riverfront Master Plan" (see attached report "Connecting the Right Side of the Tracks - A Plan for Windsor's Riverfront Community") was completed under the leadership of Jason Rasmussen (currently Executive Director of MARC), Tom Marsh (currently Windsor Town Manager and Vice Chair of MARC), Donna Sweaney (President, Windsor Improvement Corporation), Bob Haight (then Windsor Zoning Administrator), and others.

The Riverfront Master Plan shows substantial unrealized opportunity for development in the riverfront area of Windsor, adjacent to the downtown area. Its purpose is summarized as

“The most important thing about this plan is that it describes a unified, coherent vision for the Riverfront area that responds to the realities of the environmental and economic conditions in Windsor today. As projects advance and implementation unfolds, there will no doubt be some adjustments to achieve the vision, but this plan provides a place to start.”

## **CONCLUSION**

For these four reasons and those we sent to the Board in our previous comments of March 18<sup>th</sup>, we urge the Board to reject Tier 1B designation on the Windsor prison site – particularly the approximately 100-acre area lying outside of the razor wire fence (which encloses about 20 acres).

### **Attachments:**

House Bill 513 (H.513), As Introduced, 2025

“Connecting the Right Side of the Tracks – A Plan for Windsor’s Riverfront,” c. 2020.