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Notes from editor (not for publication):



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 Act 181 needs to work with people — not against them

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

2 If the system is unclear, the risk isn't just confusion — it's
3 costly mistakes and potential enforcement actions. And for
4 people trying to build, invest, or even just stay here, that matters.

####END SUBHED####

5 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

6 WE WENT THROUGH an eight-year Act 250 review process
7 in Vermont. We ultimately received the permit, but the process
8 itself felt punitive the entire time.

9 That experience is why we're paying close attention to
10 how Act 181 is being rolled out.

11 Because once again, it feels ... unclear.

12 And that's a problem.
13 How a law is implemented matters just as much as what
14 it says.

15 When you work with a fire department on safety codes,
16 they'll often walk your building with you, point things out, and
17 help you understand the requirements and get into compliance
18 early on.

19 That's a system designed to guide people to success.
20 (And a big thank you to the Windham County fire department for
21 how they approach this work!)

22 Our experience with Act 250 didn't feel that way - and
23 our concern is that Act 181 could follow a similar path if clarity
24 and guidance aren't prioritized early.

25 * * *

26 RIGHT NOW, I think a lot of Vermonters are asking the
27 same questions:

28 What does compliance actually look like?

29 Where is the guidance?

30 Will this be collaborative — or reactive?

31 And what does enforcement look like in practice?

32 Because if the system is unclear, the risk isn't just
33 confusion — it's costly mistakes and potential enforcement
34 actions.

35 And for people trying to build, invest, or even just stay
36 here, that matters.

37 * * *

38 I AM NOT AGAINST reasonable regulation meant to protect
39 our land, our wildlife, and our communities.

40 But I am asking for clarity, transparency, and a process
41 that works with people — not against them.

42 If there are clear resources, guidance, or examples
43 already available on how Act 181 will be implemented and
44 enforced in practice, we would genuinely appreciate being
45 pointed to them.

46 Not another round of community meetings — we
47 attended many during our Act 250 process that led to little clarity.
48 What’s needed is clear, written guidance, including when Act
49 250 applies and a transparent breakdown of potential
50 enforcement costs, so people aren’t left navigating that
51 uncertainty on their own.

52 * * *

53 VERMONT IS already facing rising costs, from property
54 taxes to housing.

55 If new systems add uncertainty or unexpected financial
56 risk, it raises a bigger question:

57 Can people realistically afford to live and build here
58 long-term?

59 And in an aging state, why would anyone want to move
60 here if they don’t know how zoning and land use actually work?

61 Because in reality, no place is truly “no zone” in Vermont
62 — there are always layers of regulation to navigate.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

63 **KATHERINE PARTINGTON** is co-owner of Weatherhead
64 Hollow, a 1792 Vermont Farmstead that hosts artist residencies,
65 country getaways, events and weddings.

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

####BEGIN MAXISSUE####

66 0

####END MAXISSUE####

LINKS:

####BEGIN LINKS####

67

###END LINKS###

VIDEO:

###BEGIN VIDEO###

68

###END VIDEO###

LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

###BEGIN LOGLINE###

69

###END LOGLINE###