

PREAMBLE

Legislative PRIORITIES



VLCT Policy Statement

State, federal, and local governments must proactively work together to take advantage of opportunities and address challenges. Shifting costs and obligations from federal to state and from state to local governments is neither sustainable nor acceptable. Where these Municipal Policy priorities are silent on public policy issues affecting municipal government, it shall be the position of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns to support provision of authority, autonomy, and resources to cities and towns.

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Municipal Authority

Properly adopted municipal charters and charter amendments should take effect one year after their approval without a vote by the legislature, unless both chambers vote by majority to take up the municipal charter or amendment for consideration. Only provisions never approved by the legislature should be taken up for a vote of the General Assembly. Previously approved provisions should be automatically approved for municipalities that subsequently request them.

The legislature should enable all cities, towns, and villages to adopt consumption taxes. The State of Vermont should fully fund all state-mandated programs.

Public Safety

Provide public safety officials the authority, information, and funding to combat, in a coordinated fashion, Vermont's growing drug culture. State-sponsored initiatives to address opiate addiction should be supported by evidence-based models. The legislature should identify the effects of the legalization of marijuana on cities, towns, and villages, including the impacts on local school populations, municipal police and first responders, municipal ordinances and municipal budgets. The legislature should not legalize marijuana.

Waste Management

Ensure that the State of Vermont's rules, regulations, and guidelines are flexible enough to enable local governments to determine the most appropriate collection, storage, and treatment methods for sewage, solid waste, wastewater, and recyclables.

Air Quality and Energy

The legislature should ensure that Vermont's energy supply remains reliable and that the Public Service Board (PSB) restores the balance between the transition to renewable energy and the protection of land use priorities established in municipal plans and state land use goals.

Accord automatic party status to affected adjacent and host municipalities in Section 248 proceedings. The PSB should give "substantial deference" to municipal concerns and determinations by holding hearings in any municipality potentially affected by a proposed project. Include all local decisions concerning the project within the PSB docket. Formulate areas of inquiry based on concerns raised in the local hearing process, and require any PSB decision to address those concerns raised in municipal board determinations and adopted municipal plans.

Water Quality

Provide financial and technical support to municipalities to implement the federal Clean Water Act, its associated total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) and Act 64, the Vermont Clean Water Act. Ensure that public dollars are spent in the most fair, effective, and efficient manner to mitigate phosphorus and other TMDL-regulated discharges. All potential mitigation efforts should undergo a cost-benefit analysis, and implementation should be prioritized based on those analyses.

Do not require municipalities to construct treatment plants that meet the highest available technical standards for discharges to impaired waters, regardless of cost. Instead, state and local governments, developers, farmers, and other stakeholders must reduce stormwater runoff from non-point sources of pollution, where significant reductions in phosphorus discharges will be achieved.

Please visit

vlct.org/advocacy/legislative-platform

to read the 2016 VLCT Municipal Policy in its entirety.

About VLCT

Founded in 1967, the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) is a voluntary membership organization that provides services to Vermont's municipalities. All 246 cities and towns in Vermont are currently members, as are an additional 141 associate member villages, counties, regional planning commissions, and housing authorities.

VLCT Advocacy Staff



Karen Horn (above left)
Director, Public Policy and Advocacy

Karen has worked on municipal issues for VLCT for 29 years. Her areas of expertise include capital, operating and state budgets, environmental regulations – including water issues – land use and planning, public safety and emergency management, and employee-employer matters.

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Gwynn Zakov (above right)
Municipal Policy Advocate

Gwynn joined VLCT as a Staff Attorney in early 2014 and VLCT's Advocacy team in late 2015. She served five years as Second Assistant Clerk of the Vermont House and was Zoning Administrator for the Town of Richmond. Her areas of expertise include the principles, practices, and authority of local government officials, planning and zoning, transportation, employment, and clerk-treasurer matters.

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Dates to Remember

Wednesday, February 10, 2016

VLCT Local Government Day in the Legislature

Thursday, October 8, 2016

VLCT Town Fair and Annual Meeting



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VLCT 2016

MUNICIPAL POLICY PRIORITIES



*Serving and
Strengthening
Vermont Local
Governments*

