WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

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VERMONT LEAGUE OF CITIES & TOWNS

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The ***Weekly Legislative Report,*** a publication of the Vermont League of Cities & Towns, is published each Friday during Vermont's legislative session.

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Temporary Gas Tax for Municipal/State Transportation Funding Needs

The price of gasoline continues to plunge to levels unseen for years, except briefly in the depths of the Great Recession. The costs to towns to meet highway and bridge maintenance and improvements are increasing, particularly in light of new demands being made to reduce the impact of run-off into our state waters. We have a unique opportunity to meet these needs with limited negative impact on taxpayers, but we have to act decisively and soon.

At its January 22nd meeting, the VLCT Board of Directors endorsed a plan to add a temporary gas tax only while prices remain at their current low levels and apply most of the funds generated to improving municipal roads and bridges, particularly those which are currently adding to the pollution of our lakes and streams. VLCT staff and several VLCT Board members pitched this proposal to the Senate Transportation Committee on Wednesday. Though committee members were very courteous and appreciative, suffice it to say that they will need a little more convincing before acting on it. That will be up to you.

The Proposal. The concept is to add a temporary two-cent gasoline tax for the period during which the "tax-adjusted retail price" drops below a series of price points. That price is defined in statute and is the trigger the state currently uses to determine the base price for the "transportation infrastructure assessment" and the "fuel tax assessment," which now fund much of the work of the Vermont Agency of Transportation and the aid provided to towns. The legislature could quickly pass legislation that would impose the first two-cent temporary tax trigger on when the tax-adjusted price for the previous quarter dropped below $2.75 (it is currently at $2.736). The bill could include language for two more, two-cent temporary tax levels – one if the price falls below $2.50 and the other if it falls below $2.25.

The tax-adjusted price of gas reached its recent peak in June of 2012 at $3.419. If the legislature were to enact the VLCT proposal, Vermonters would pay two cents more for the $.68 price drop that we are already enjoying. If the price continues to go down, we would pay two cents in taxes of each $.25 the price drops, for a possible total of six cents, if we were to be so lucky.

According to the Joint Fiscal Office's Fiscal Facts, the gas tax brings in approximately $3.2 million per penny. The first two-cent tax could generate $6.4 million if we were fortunate enough to have the price below $2.75 for a year and $19.2 million a year if we go below a $2.25 tax-adjusted price. If demand picks up due to the price drop, the Transportation Fund could see even higher revenues. That amount would make a nice down payment on the governor's plan to clean up Lake Champlain and prepare the rest of the state for the costs of cleaning up our other major watersheds. It could also help fund other municipal transportation grant programs for which there is tremendous demand and – with some other fixes necessary in the current gas tax structure – could close the funding gap that has opened in the Transportation Fund for FY16. It will also prepare Vermont for problems being caused at the national level due to the impending bankruptcy of the federal Highway Trust Fund.

Just in case we are lucky enough for prices to stay down semi-permanently, the legislation could include a sunset date of June 30, 2020, so that it is indeed a temporary tax as advertised.

The Need. The first need is to help municipalities make improvements in their highways to aid in the cleanup of Lake Champlain and our other impaired waterways. The current focus is on the Lake Champlain Basin, but the Connecticut River Valley is right behind in running into the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency buzz saw, so this is a statewide problem. In January 2013, the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation presented *Act 138, Water Quality Remediation, Implementation, and Funding Report* to the legislature. The second clean water priority need identified in the report after "developed land stormwater runoff" is the following:

1.2. Unregulated Stormwater Runoff from Road Networks

Annual Cost: $10.5 Million

There are over 14,000 miles of public roads in Vermont, nearly all of which require ditches and culverts for water drainage. If these structures are not properly constructed and maintained, there is significant potential for erosion of sediment into the drainage network and adjoining streams. Sediment erosion and the associated nutrient loading from roads and their drainage networks can be reduced through implementation of good erosion control and water quality protection practices during road construction and maintenance. About 80 percent of the public road miles in Vermont are maintained by towns. Municipalities need increased technical and financial assistance to help them install water quality protection structures and implement practices for their road drainage networks.

Actions Needed

- *Provide outreach and training to towns in road management practices for water quality protection.*
- *Provide state grant funding to towns to implement road management practices for water quality protection and to comply with the water quality and flood protection practices in the Vermont Agency of Transportation's Town Road and Bridge Standards.*

That report estimated that the $10.5 million annual price tag will extend for ten years. One solution a House Fish, Wildlife and Water Resources Committee member proposed yesterday was to deny transportation funding to any municipality that did not comply with all the stormwater requirements of programs, such as the as still undetermined general permit for municipal roads, and the Town Road and Bridge standards.

The second area of need is to increase assistance for two very effective state grant programs for towns – the structures and the Class 2 roadway programs. As the following tables show, these programs are chronically under-funded:

Structures (FY)	Funded ($)	Demand ($)	% Funded
2015	7,873,440.75	16,307,490.49	48%
2014	7,143,618.21	14,732,847.96	48%
2013	5,895,913.10	20,169,300.94	29%
2012	4,980,186.09	12,369,236.93	40%
2011	5,678,055.31	15,751,512.92	36%

Class 2 (FY)	Funded ($)	Demand ($)	% Funded
2015	7,775,232.25	23,300,405.28	33%
2014	7,044,270.54	23,767,843.59	30%
2013	7,473,308.68	26,141,476.43	29%
2012	7,086,130.11	26,017,149.57	27%
2011	7,157,194.72	27,683,139.69	26%

Funding for the Class 2 Roadway program was last increased by the 2010 legislature and the structures program received a $1 million bump in 2012.

Lastly, the latest state revenue projections show a shortfall of about $6 million in the Transportation Fund for FY16. Oddly enough, this is due to the plunging price of gas. That fix needs to be made regardless, but some of the proceeds of this temporary gas tax could make up for any revenue lost prior to the fix going into effect.

VLCT proposes that one-third of the revenue goes to towns to improve their roadways to reduce stormwater runoff, one-sixth goes to each of the structures and Class 2 roadway programs, and the balance (the other third) goes toward state Transportation Fund needs:

VLCT Temporary Gas Tax Beneficiaries	Two-cent Tax	Four-cent Tax	Six-cent Tax
Total (in millions)	$6.40	$12.80	$19.20
Town Highway Lake and River Cleanup Activities	$2.13	$4.26	$6.39
Structures Grant Program	$1.07	$2.14	$3.21
Class 2 Roadway Grant Program	$1.07	$2.14	$3.21
State Transportation Needs	$2.13	$4.26	$6.39

The Time is Now. As mentioned above, Vermont gas prices have dropped 20 percent in the past 18 months. State economists project that Vermonters will save more than $600 million in reduced energy costs in 2015. Many economists are projecting that gas prices will not continue to plunge for much longer, but they aren't projecting them to go back to the previous high levels for some time to come.

In a survey by Research on Adaption to Climate Change, a University of Vermont-based group, 65 percent of Vermonters interviewed would be willing to pay $40 or more a year to support improvements in water quality.

Vermont's gas tax is relatively high – $.5037 per gallon according to the American Petroleum Institute, which is the 13th highest in the U.S., but still only two cents higher than the national average of $.4829 per gallon.

Governors and legislators in many other states, regardless of party affiliation, are proposing to address their transportation infrastructure backlogs. Michigan residents will vote on a a ballot item in May. Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania raised their gas taxes effective January 1. Seven other states had already joined Vermont in raising their taxes over the past two years. The legislators and governors of Iowa, South Dakota, Nevada, Utah, New Jersey, and Louisiana are all discussing raising their gas taxes this year.

Lower prices may stimulate increased driving and tempt people to buy fuel-inefficient vehicles. A temporary gas tax would help dampen that potential demand and the carbon footprint increases that would generate.

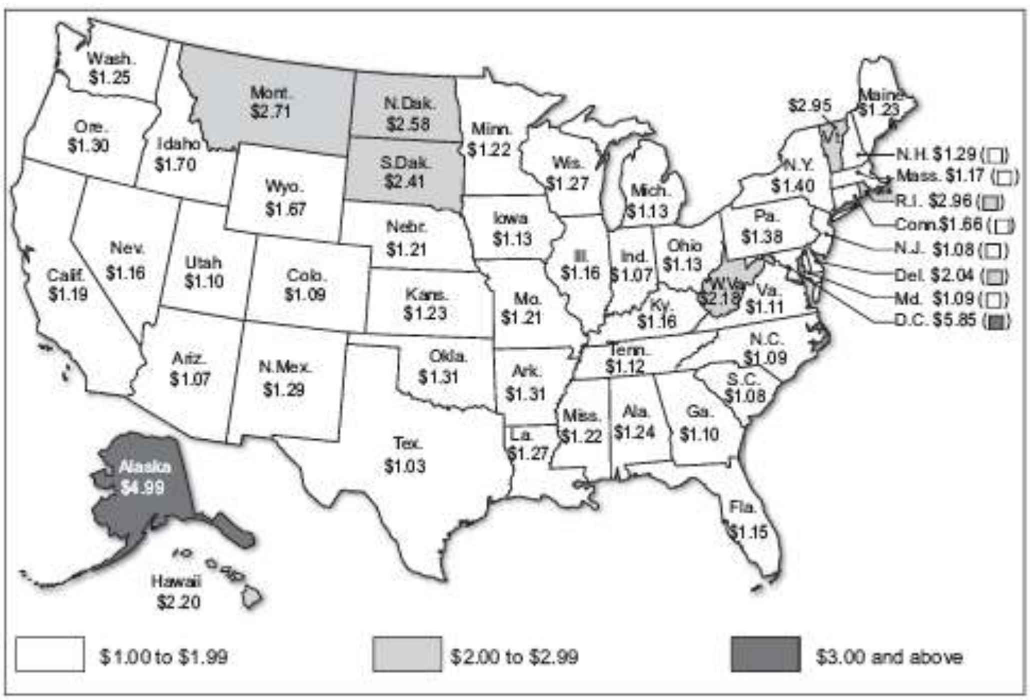
Last week, the New York Times opined that "the results of [a federal gas tax increase] could only be beneficial: for the nation's roads, bridges and transit systems, which badly need repair; for the budget; and, to the extent that higher taxes encourage greater fuel efficiency, for the climate."

We Can't Wait for the Feds. The federal gas tax has not been raised since 1993, and the Highway Fund has been propped up for the past seven years from "loans" from the federal General Fund (the one that is $18 ***trillion*** in debt). President Obama and House Speaker Boehner have both voiced skepticism about a federal gas tax increase, despite Republican Senator John Thune of South Dakota proposing one.

The current gridlock in Washington makes anything more difficult for passage, particularly new taxes. The stalemate over the federal Highway Trust Fund predates this current issue and is based on the knowledge of "donor" and "receiving" states under any formula the feds may finally land on.

The map below is from the Vermont Transportation Funding Option Section 40 report, which was presented to the legislature in 2013. From 2005 to 2009, Vermont received $2.95 for every dollar we sent to Washington. Notice that every state got more back from the Highway Fund than they contributed. Everyone's a winner! That only happened because of the General Fund loan, which obviously cannot continue for very long. When that General Fund support ends, large states with large numbers of congresspersons will become donor states and will not be in the mood to send more money to Washington than they will get back – it makes more sense for them to raise the money and keep it locally. Vermont's share went down substantially from the $2.95 for every dollar sent during the most recent reauthorization. From Vermont's perspective, it will only get worse if the Federal Highway Trust Fund is reauthorized again. We certainly can't continue to get as much if Congress continues to kick the can down the road and delays reauthorization of the Highway Fund.

Looking at the map, it is no wonder that a senator from South Dakota would lead the charge for more revenues for the federal program. Being from the majority party, he now has more of a chance of preserving his return ratio than Vermont does, given the shift in power in D.C. that took place in November.



States' Return for Every $1.00 Contributed to the HTF (2005-2009)

Money we send to Washington comes back with all sorts of strings attached and a myriad of set-asides for projects that only tangentially benefit the users of our highways and bridges. Each dollar that comes back is a lot smaller than the one we send down there. Even Vermont would be better served in raising and spending its own money rather than pinning our hopes on largesse from Washington.

Waiting for the Feds to act gives us less of a window to take advantage of the low prices.

Town officials need to let their legislators know they need financial help in meeting the demands on their highway and bridge systems. This dip in gas prices is a unique opportunity to capture at least a down payment on the additional costs that will be imposed on us to reduce erosion and runoff from our roads. Let them know you support having the state gas tax pay for these costs rather than more property taxes.

Contact Steve Jeffrey at 1-800-649-7915 or sjeffrey@vlct.org.

The Continuing Saga of State Support for Education

With Vermonters struggling to pay their property tax bill, I also fully fund the General Fund transfer to the Education Fund. — Gov. Peter Shumlin in his budget speech, January 15, 2015.

Last Tuesday, a Joint Fiscal Committee staff person detailed how the governor's budget cuts the statutorily required General Fund transfer to the Education Fund by $3 million, meaning that property taxes will make up for the shortfall. We alerted you to this development in an article in our January 23 *Weekly Legislative Report*. It has now been confirmed by the legislature's fiscal staff (Governor's Education Finance Proposals).

The General Fund provides $295.8 million of the total $1.057 billion Education Fund, or about 19.6 percent of the total. For comparison's sake, property taxes contribute $1.053 *billion* or 68 percent. State law (16 V.S.A. § 4025(a)(2)) requires that *"[f]or each fiscal year, the amount of the general funds appropriated or transferred to the Education Fund shall be $277,400,000.00 increased by the most recent New England Economic Project Cumulative Price Index, as of November 15, for state and local government purchases of goods and services from fiscal year 2012 through the fiscal year for which the payment is being determined, plus an additional one-tenth of one percent.*" This law requires that the General Fund transfer for FY16 must be 2.53 percent higher than last year, or $303.3 million. The governor's budget contains a transfer of only $300,378,103. It also contains the following escape clause in section E.513 of the budget bill: *Pursuant to Sec. B.513, and notwithstanding the provisions of 16 V.S.A. Sec. 4025(a)(2), there is appropriated in fiscal year 2016 from the General Fund for transfer to the Education Fund the amount of $300,378,103.*

Explanation: The general fund appropriation to the education fund is calculated to reflect a reduced contribution to the current use appropriation, and a re-focusing of the Corrections Community High School of Vermont program.

The governor has proposed changes in two programs, which will reduce costs to the Education Fund, but he is harvesting all the savings realized by reducing the General Fund transfer by a like amount.

And if that were not enough: The miscellaneous tax bill proposed by the governor through his tax commissioner contains the following section: *(a) Notwithstanding 16 V.S.A. Sec. 4025(a)(3), revenue generated by the profits from the sales of all lottery games sold on Touch Play Lottery consoles in an amount not to exceed $2,000,000 shall be transferred annually to the Vermont Veterans' Home Operations Special Fund, which is hereby created, and which shall be managed pursuant to subchapter 5 of chapter 7 of title 32. Expenditures from the Fund shall be solely for operations of the Vermont Veterans' Home.* You may recall hearing over and over on all the Vermont Lottery advertisements that "100 percent of lottery profits go to the Education Fund." That, too, is mandated by state law 16 V.S.A. § 4025(a)(3). Every lottery game and manner of playing them has been dedicated to the Education Fund since its inception. There is no question that this new way of playing basically the same games will reduce the revenues that should all go into the Education Fund.

This proposal will cost "Vermonters struggling to pay their property tax bill" an additional $2 million in property taxes.

Town officials should be outraged that they will be forced to raise an additional one-half cent on the state education property tax due to all these "notwithstandings." Let your legislators know of your displeasure with these gubernatorial proposals and **insist that all Education Fund revenues are deposited into the fund as required by law**.

Contact Steve Jeffrey at 1-800-649-7915 or sjeffrey@vlct.org.

Medicaid Cost Shift – It's Baaaaack

For many years, VLCT has advocated for a reduction in the Vermont health system cost shift, which adds hundreds of million dollars to health insurance costs. The administration has proposed implementing a 0.7 percent payroll tax on employers to begin reducing the Medicaid cost shift. Unfortunately, the plan, as proposed, is not as good as it appears at first glance.

According to the Green Mountain Care Board 2015 Annual Report, "cost shift occurs when hospitals and other health care providers charge higher prices to patients who have private insurance or no insurance to make up for lower reimbursement from Medicare, Medicaid, charity care, or bad debt." *Hospital-only* cost shift, says the report, has increased from $226 million in 2008 to $393 million in budget year 2015. Of this total, Medicaid cost shift alone has increased from $103 million to $150 million. Just ten years ago, the Medicaid hospital cost shift was $57 million. Since then, that cost shift has almost tripled because the state Medicaid reimbursement rates have not kept up with the increasing cost of health care and also because Medicaid eligibility has been greatly expanded. Medicaid reimbursements to health care providers other than hospitals are also quite low. Medicaid payments are estimated to be 40 to 60 percent of actual costs and about 80 percent of Medicare reimbursement rates. These costs are shifted on to purchasers of private health insurance, such as Vermont municipalities, through higher premium rates.

The administration's proposal would raise about $90 million a year in new payroll taxes. In addition, there would be a federal Medicaid match of about $100 million for the total funds raised of approximately $190 million. Based on estimated municipal payrolls of $311 million, the tax on municipalities would be $2.1 million. The proposed increase in reimbursement rates would bring Medicaid reimbursements up to the level of Medicare reimbursements. This is only a portion of the cost shift as Medicare reimbursement rates also shift costs to private health insurance. Any Medicaid reimbursement rates that exceed Medicare rates are not eligible for federal match.

One problem with this proposal is that only $90 million of the total $200 million in new revenue would end up reducing health insurance rates related to the Medicaid cost shift. The balance of the funds would go to other health system endeavors, including covering an increase in the Medicaid case load, additional funding for the Blueprint for Health, and additional funding for home health care and other health care agencies. Currently, these costs are covered through the state General Fund and a variety of other health system-related taxes and fees.

Just over half of the total funds raised by the payroll tax and accompanying federal match would actually go to reduce health insurance rates resulting from the Medicaid cost shift. According to the administration, these funds would reduce health insurance costs by up to five percent less than what they would otherwise have been. In other words, this proposal will not lead to lower health insurance premiums, but only to premium *increases* being lower than they would have been without the payroll tax.

In testimony to the House Health Care Committee, Lawrence Miller, Chief of Health Care Reform, explained that funds from the payroll tax would go into the Health Care Resources Fund to ensure that the money was used to increase Medicaid provider reimbursements and reduce health insurance costs as intended. To assuage the committee, he explained that this dedicated fund is much like the Education Fund. This analogy should not give municipalities and property tax payers any comfort whatsoever. (See previous article.)

Miller also provided a report titled "Payroll Tax Scenarios" to the House Ways and Means Committee, which is posted online at Lawrence Miller Testimony. The chart on page four of the report shows how the funds raised would be allocated. Of particular interest is the $16.95 million that is proposed to be used to fund "Steady State Budget Pressures." This is funding for things that would otherwise be the responsibility of the General Fund. Also of interest is the $30 million allocated to fund the Medicaid expansion that has just occurred. The state did not allocate additional funds for the growth in Medicaid enrollment arising out of the Affordable Care Act and the establishment of Vermont Health Connect. Lacking additional funding, provider Medicaid reimbursement rates would need to be *decreased* in order to provide services for more people for the same total amount of money. This would add one to two percent to health insurance costs for 2016. Thus, a significant part of the payroll tax would be allocated to fund a *prospective* cost shift as opposed to fund a reduction in the existing cost shift.

Because the administration is not budgeting for medical cost increases for current Medicaid beneficiaries, much – if not all – of the rest of the payroll tax will also be prospective helping to prevent the Medicaid cost shift total from increasing. Medicaid in Vermont is a $1.4 billion program. A three percent increase in medical costs (medical trends have been running higher than that) adds $42 million to the amount of cost shift if the state does not budget increased funding for Medicaid.

In total, most of the funding proposed to reduce Medicaid cost shift is not in fact reducing cost shift. It is actually being allocated to keep cost shift from increasing further.

At its January 22 meeting, the VLCT Board of Directors voted to support the governor's proposed payroll tax *if, and only if*, the entire proceeds of the tax and any federal matching funds that are generated go solely to reducing or eliminating the Medicaid cost shift and that result in a dollar-for-dollar reduction in health insurance premiums, and to ensure that all providers – including municipally funded ambulance services – get the increased Medicaid reimbursement.

The present proposal does not meet this standard because more than half of the funds raised go to purposes other than reducing Medicaid cost shift and health insurance premiums. This follows the same pattern as the Education Fund, which was originally intended to fund local school districts, but has since had a number of other education programs that were previously funded by the General Fund morph into programs funded through property taxes.

The proposal also does not address how the payroll tax – and, for that matter, the General Fund support of Medicaid payments – will keep up with the rising costs of the health care system. These costs, even under the most optimistic cost control scenarios, are rising faster that the rate of inflation, and certainly faster than wages on which the payroll tax is based. This means that, barring increased funding through the General Fund or an increase in the payroll tax, the Medicaid cost shift will again begin to grow.

Finally, while well-intentioned, it is not entirely clear how the increase in Medicaid provider reimbursements will flow through the providers and the health insurers with the full amount applying to reduced health insurance premiums.

In summary, we have the following concerns regarding the governor's proposal:

- Just over half of the amount raised in payroll taxes and the federal match actually goes to reducing health insurance rates. The amount allocated to Medicaid cost shift reduction is the same as employers are paying in new taxes, with some redistribution from employers that provide no or low cost health insurance to those that provide rich, higher cost health insurance. In this respect, the tax might as well not be imposed in the first place, as the cost shift is almost dollar for dollar replaced with this new tax that employers already paying the cost shift will now have to pay.
- Almost half of the new funds raised will go to other state health care programs. This is the proverbial "camel's nose under the tent" situation. Once the idea of using this tax for purposes other than to

reduce Medicaid cost shift is established, we may soon find a *whole* camel in our tent.

- It will be difficult to ensure that all of the increases in Medicaid provider reimbursements result in the same amount of lower charges for medical services to private payers, including health insurers. Even if this is accomplished, it will be a challenge to ensure that health insurance rates fully reflect these savings. Even with some regulatory oversight there are many "leakage points" to reduce the savings that pass through the complex health care system.
- No plan has been articulated to address the likelihood that health care costs will rise faster than statewide payrolls and incomes that form the tax base being used to fund Medicaid. After this adjustment, will the cost shift begin to increase again? Will the payroll tax be increased? Will the state use the Health Care Resources Fund to pay for items previously funded by the General Fund? The Education Fund and its expanded use does not give us encouragement.

Local officials need to talk with their legislators. Tell them to change the governor's proposal to assure that the Medicaid cost shift is reduced substantially more than the new taxes their property taxpayers will have to pay through the payroll tax.

Contact Dave Sichel at 1-800-649-7915 or dsichel@vlct.org.

Underground Utilities – More Camels' Noses

H.58 is essentially a repeat of H.759, a bill that was introduced last year to mandate that municipal water and wastewater systems participate in the Public Utility Underground Facility Damage Prevention System, also known as Dig Safe, pursuant to regulations that would be promulgated by the Public Service Board (PSB). H.759 did not make it out of the House Commerce Committee, its first committee of jurisdiction. Nevertheless, the chair and vice chair of the committee wrote to the Public Service Department (PSD) last August requesting a report on requiring water and wastewater systems to participate in Dig Safe. That report was provided to the committee last December. The department also hosted a Dig Safe workshop at Norwich University last summer.

The PSB has jurisdiction over private water companies primarily to regulate rates. It has no jurisdiction over the 102 municipal, three state, and 33 private wastewater treatment systems. The PSB regulates 24 private water companies. The Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) regulates all of the 420 public community water systems, 240 non-transient non-community water systems (schools and businesses with their own water source), and 700 transient non-community water systems (restaurants, camps, motels, etc., with their own source of drinking water) in the state, an arrangement that makes sense because of the environmental and water quality issues that water and wastewater systems must address. Yet both H.759 and H.58 would extend the reach of the PSD to water systems and wastewater treatment systems as well as to the operators who maintain them. There have been other efforts over the years to extend PSB jurisdiction to water and wastewater systems, albeit not recently. Over the course of those efforts, local officials have advocated for moving all water system jurisdiction to ANR.

Dig Safe is a member-pay program whose required members in Vermont are gas, electric, telephone, and cable television utilities. Currently, many towns require by local ordinance that anyone excavating within the public right-of-way must first obtain an excavation permit from the town. Towns do not issue those permits until they are satisfied that the contractor knows where municipal utilities in the municipal rights of way are located. Towns believe strongly that they are already doing what this legislation would require, without incurring the costs of membership in a private organization such as Dig Safe. Of course, municipalities may join Dig Safe and several have, including Burlington, Castleton, the fire districts of Colchester and East Middlebury, North Hero, Stowe, Waterbury, Wilmington, and, in the wake of its recent district heat construction project, Montpelier.

Local officials should urge their legislators to **oppose** the unfunded mandate contemplated by H.58 – legislation in search of a problem.

Contact Karen Horn at 1-800-649-7915 or khorn@vlct.org.

BILL NUMBER	NEW BILLS SUMMARY	CURRENT LOCATION
H.47	Would require a town clerk to mail an early voter absentee ballot to each registered voter of the town.	House Government Operations
H.48	Would create a study committee to recommend a system that equalizes pay between the State Police and deputy sheriffs.	House Government Operations
H.49	Would require that a sending school district pay tuition to a receiving district for each student who participates in statewide public high school choice pursuant to 16 V.S.A. 10 § 822a.	House Education
H.50	Would require the Joint Fiscal Office annually to determine the total dollar amount required for supervisory unions and school districts to implement newly enacted State statutes and rules where the statute or rule does not provide new funding or a new funding mechanism to fulfill the requirement. After review by the Joint Fiscal Committee, the amount would be added to the General Fund transfer to the Education Fund for that and each following fiscal year.	House Education
H.53	Would require an isolation distance for a potable water supply and wastewater system to be located on the property on which the supply or system is located, be authorized to extend onto property owned by a person other than the permit applicant, or be waived by the permit applicant if certain criteria are satisfied.	House Fish, Wildlife & Water Resources
H.54	Would require the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets to adopt by rule a process to certify the operation of custom applicators of manure, nutrients, sludge, or other solid waste from a manure pit or digester. Would, by April 1, 2016, provide that only a custom applicator certified by the secretary may apply manure, nutrients, sludge, or other solid waste from a manure pit or digester on fields owned or operated by a large or medium farm located in a watershed of a nutrient-impaired lake.	House Fish, Wildlife & Water Resources
H.56	Would make a domestic dog owner strictly liable if his or her dog bites a person.	House Agriculture and Forest Products
H.58	Would make miscellaneous amendments to Vermont's Public Utility Underground Facility Damage Prevention System. (See article on page __).	House Commerce & Econ. Development
H.69	Would reform the state education funding system by establishing a statewide reasonable cost standard for public education, setting a single statewide property tax rate to raise a fixed percent of statewide education funding and equitably distributing revenue to local school districts, and establishing accountability mechanisms.	House Education
H.76	Would prohibit teachers and school administrators from striking and school boards from imposing contracts and to require mandatory binding arbitration.	House Gen., Housing and Military Affairs
H.79	Would set a statewide per pupil spending amount for each equalized student in each district. The spending amount would be indexed to inflation. Towns could spend over that amount in limited circumstances, but any additional spending would be raised on the municipal property tax base, not the statewide property tax base.	House Education
H.82	Would make adjustments in the FY15 omnibus appropriations act.	On Action Calendar
H.87	Would transfer the administration of the Vermont Enhanced 911 system to the Department of Public Safety.	House Government Operations
H.90	Would approve a Burlington City Charter amendment that would allow police to confiscate a deadly weapon from an alleged abuser when a police officer has probable cause to believe that a person has been the victim of domestic abuse.	House Government Operations

BILL NUMBER	NEW BILLS SUMMARY	CURRENT LOCATION
H.91	Would approve a Burlington City Charter amendment that would require that when a firearm is not in a person's immediate possession or control, it must be locked in a safe storage depository or rendered incapable of being fired.	House Government Operations
H.92	Would approve a Burlington City Charter amendment that would prohibit a person from carrying or possessing a firearm on property owned or controlled by an establishment licensed to serve alcohol on premises.	House Government Operations
H.100	Would allow municipalities to adopt setback and screening requirements that apply to solar electric generation plants.	Not yet assigned.
H.101	Would prohibit management of mental health insurance benefits separately from other health care benefits and prohibit prior authorization requirements for mental health care that differ from medical or surgical prior authorization requirements.	Not yet assigned.
S.33	Would transfer the administration of the Vermont Enhanced 911 system to the Department of Public Safety.	Senate Finance
S.39	Would exempt a solid waste transporter from the requirements for solid waste recycling in a municipality if the municipality is achieving the per capita disposal rate in the State Solid Waste Plan or the municipality demonstrates that its progress toward meeting the diversion goal in the State Solid Waste Plan is substantially equivalent to that of municipalities complying with the recycling requirements.	Senate Natural Resources & Energy
S.43	Would amend the requirements for a town's or municipality's list of delinquent taxpayers.	Senate Finance
S.45	Would exempt the use of up to 15 bottom barriers on a lake from aquatic nuisance permit requirements.	Senate Natural Resources & Energy
S.46	Would establish a Water Quality Improvement Fund to use existing revenues to fund water quality improvement, including implementation and administration of municipal stormwater management programs.	Senate Natural Resources & Energy
S.48	Would allow municipalities to adopt setback and screening requirements that apply to solar electric generation plants.	Senate Natural Resources & Energy
S.49	Would adopt multiple provisions related to the remediation and preservation of the waters of the State.	Senate Natural Resources & Energy
S.50	Would allow municipalities to adopt land use bylaws for the purpose of regulating commercial building facades in designated areas to ensure the facades are not left in a state of disrepair.	Senate Natural Resources & Energy
S.51	Would repeal the Sustainably Priced Energy Enterprise Development Program, effective July 1, 2015. Would also create a Renewable Energy Standard and Energy Transformation (RESET) Program for electric utilities effective in 2017.	Not yet assigned.

Local Government Day 2015

A reminder that **Local Government Day in the Legislature 2015** is now only 19 days away (i.e., **Wednesday, February 18**). This will be a great opportunity for local officials to talk with their representatives and senators concerning the issues that we address each week in our *Reports*. You can register online at www.vlct.org/eventscalendar.