



WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

March 13, 2015

Inside This Issue

- 2 Payroll Tax Gets a New Life
- 4 Natural Burial Grounds
- 4 Siting Electric Energy Facilities
- 5 Welcome, New Local Officials
- 7 Public Hearings
- 8 New Bills

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

VLCT

89 Main Street, Suite 4
Montpelier, VT 05602-2948

Tel 802-229-9111
Fax 802-229-2211
Email info@vlct.org
Website www.vlct.org

Follow VLCT Advocacy on



Steven E. Jeffrey
Executive Director

Karen B. Horn
Director, Public Policy & Advocacy

Chloe V. Collins
Associate, Advocacy & Information

David Gunn, Editor

To contact your legislator, call the Sergeant-at-Arms at 800-322-5616, fax 802-828-2424, or access the legislative website <http://legislature.vermont.gov> for legislators' email addresses.

State Lands PILOT Payments also at Risk

In our last report ([Weekly Legislative Report No. 9](#)), we told you of the potential of the state cutting \$250,000 from the state payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) for state buildings. The \$5.8 million distributed to towns hosting state buildings is actually raised not from state taxes but from local option sales and rooms and meals taxes town voters have levied on themselves. The Administration and the legislature's Joint Fiscal Office (JFO) have suggested that the legislature consider assessing those local funds to help pay for the state Department of Taxes' Division of Property Taxation and Review (PVR) budget.

There is also a state PILOT program for state Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) lands, and that program funding is in the crosshairs of legislative budget writers as well. Two hundred and five towns are reimbursed one percent of the fair market value (or current use value for state land enrolled in that program) of the 350,866 acres of ANR land. Reimbursements totaled \$2,240,226 for the current year, but there is a story behind that figure. Towns with ANR lands should have received \$2.82 million last year; instead, that figure was cut to the \$2.24 million figure and PVR, the ANR, and the JFO were tasked to study this program and report on any changes that should be made to it. The [committee's report](#) recommended two options, both of which would decrease the amount that towns receive in the future.

Option A payments would be:

- Based on fair market value of all state ANR lands, eliminating the option of having the payments based on current use values.
- Paid to all towns at a rate of 0.5 percent instead of the one percent paid now – a 50 percent reduction. This is based on the fact that the average town tax rate is approximately \$0.50.
- For any new state lands, paid at the current one percent rate for the first year of state ownership. This is to maintain “(1) good faith with the communities within which land had most recently been acquired, and (2) local support for land acquisitions both currently in process or that may occur in the future.”
- Phased in over three years – in the first year, one-third of the change in payment (up or down) will be made; in the second year, two-thirds; and the full effects will be in place the third year. The first year's phase-in could be as early as the state fiscal year starting this July.

Option B payments would be:

- Based on fair market value of all state ANR lands, eliminating the option of having the payments based on current use values, as with Option A.

- Paid to all towns based on their actual municipal tax rates (which range from \$.039 in Brunswick, which has a tremendous amount of state lands and limited municipal services, to Barre City at \$1.704, which has no state lands within its borders).
- Phased in as under Option A.

Option A would see total payments reduced by \$170,000 statewide when fully phased in, whereas a fully phased in Option B would be a total \$283,732 hit on recipient towns.

The committee report includes a complete spreadsheet of the individual impacts on each town for each of the options.

Given that the legislature is looking for coming up with around \$130 million in either cuts in payments or increases in taxes or some combination thereof, there is a good chance that this program may be on the chopping block. This will only mean that those towns affected will have to increase their property taxes to make up for the state cuts.

The governor's budget request was to hold the ANR PILOT payments at the amount received last year of \$2.24 million. If the state needs to raise taxes to dig itself out of a fiscal hole, it should raise its own taxes and not shift the burden onto towns and property taxpayers.

Contact your senators and representatives (you can find their email addresses at <http://legislature.vermont.gov/people/search/2016> or call the Sergeant at Arms at 802-828-2228) and leave a message for them. Urge them to *not* increase property taxes by cutting funding to the ANR PILOT program. Urge them to level-fund the program at the FY15 amount approved last year.

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

Payroll Tax Gets a New Life

At the beginning of this legislative session, the administration proposed a payroll tax of 0.7 percent to help reduce the Medicaid cost shift. (See [Weekly Legislative Report No. 5](#) for details.) Most agree that the health insurance premiums that employers, including municipalities, pay are significantly inflated to offset the underpayment to providers by government programs such as Medicaid. The proposed tax was greeted with skepticism in the legislature and particularly by the House Ways and Means Committee, through which any tax bill must pass.

The payroll tax has re-emerged in [H.481](#), which passed out of the House Health Care Committee on Thursday morning. The proposal reduces the proposed payroll tax to 0.3 percent and eliminates the employer health care assessment tax (formerly Catamount tax). The employer health care assessment is a tax of \$140.84 per full-time equivalent (FTE) employee per quarter (\$563.36 annually) assessed on employers that do not offer employee health benefits or do not offer these benefits to some of their employees. Some municipal employers pay this tax based on their seasonal and part-time employees who are not eligible for health insurance benefits. The bill also introduces a sugar-sweetened beverage tax of two cents per ounce.

H. 481 would raise net state revenues about \$50 million a year. Additionally, some of the state money raised and used to increase Medicaid reimbursements would draw a federal match of about \$43.7 million, making total available funds \$93.7 million. Thus, the proposal would reduce Medicaid cost shift by an estimated \$39.8 million, or about 26 percent of the total estimated shift.

While this proposal appears to use the payroll tax revenue to fund the reduction of cost shift and the sugar tax revenue to fund other health reform priorities, it is still problematic. Here's why:

- The payroll tax alone raises approximately \$37.1 million while the elimination of the employer



assessment on employers that do not provide employee health insurance reduces the net “employer tax” revenue to \$17.9 million. This seems to reward employers that do not provide employee health insurance and reduces the funds available to reduce the cost shift. One could argue that the federal match money is being used to fund the elimination of the employer assessment because the amount raised by the payroll tax, \$37.1 million, and the estimated amount of cost shift reduction, \$39.8 million, are almost identical.

- The money being paid into the health system through the payroll tax is cost certain; the savings in health insurance premiums are speculative.
- The timing of the tax is problematic for municipal government, towns, and schools alike. Municipal and school budgets for fiscal year 2016 have, for the most part, already been adopted. The proposed payroll tax would go into effect on January 1, 2016, halfway through FY16 for those on July 1 fiscal years. The result would be an unfunded budget expense. Will lower health insurance rates offset this? It’s hard to know, but we do know that any potential savings were not included in the budgets.
- Retaining the employer assessment would result in more state revenue to leverage additional federal Medicaid match. This would allow the amount dedicated to cost shift reduction to approach the amount that was projected from the previously proposed 0.7 percent tax at less than half the cost to employers.
- A portion of the payroll tax, about \$1.7 million, is being used to fund the state’s own payroll tax obligation. If the state can’t afford to pay this tax, how can others, especially property taxpayers, be expected to afford it?
- The proposal allows for leakage of the cost shift reduction funds. This is because regulators cannot ensure that all of the Medicaid reimbursement level increases will translate into lower health insurance premiums. To achieve a \$39 million reduction in cost shift, the proposal would increase Medicaid provider reimbursements by \$51 million. This translates to an increase in health system costs.
- None of the cost shift reduction funding will be used to increase Medicaid reimbursement for ambulance services, which transport such patients, many of which are funded to a large degree through local property taxes. The bill does provide for a study as to why Medicaid ambulance service reimbursement rates are so low.
- While not a problem with this proposal per se, the proposal does not fund the increase in General Fund Medicaid expenses that are already “baked into” the budget. This will increase the size of the General Fund deficit needing to be addressed by about \$17 million. Also not addressed are increases in the number of Medicaid subscribers resulting from the federal Affordable Care Act and state medical out-of-pocket and premium cost sharing subsidies for lower income Vermonters. An increase in Medicaid health system utilization without an increase in funding leads to reductions in Medicaid reimbursement rates.
- 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?

VLCT will support the 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 result in a dollar-for-dollar reduction in health insurance premiums, and ensure that all providers – including municipally funded ambulance services – get the increased Medicaid reimbursement.

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

Natural Burial Grounds

[H.25](#), the bill that would authorize creation of a natural burial ground, was voted out of the House General, Housing and Military Affairs Committee on Thursday. Local officials testified on the bill on February 11 during which they detailed concerns they had with the bill as proposed. (See [Weekly Legislative Report No. 7](#).) A natural burial ground is defined as a cemetery that is maintained by using “ecological land management practices” and is “without vaults.” Only embalming fluids that are non-toxic are allowed, and only non-toxic, non-hazardous, plant-derived burial containers or shrouds, if any, may be used.

The committee incorporated recommendations of the Department of Health, the Agency of Natural Resources, and local governments to establish natural burial ground setbacks from water supplies and outside source protection areas, river corridors, and flood hazard areas. A developer of a natural burial ground would need to record plats of the property. The requirement that a municipality maintain a cemetery that has fallen into disrepair (18 V.S.A. § 5362) would not apply to a natural burial ground. A municipality would not be required to maintain or repair a fence around a natural burial ground “so long as the perimeter of the natural burial ground is marked in a less obtrusive manner, such as by survey markers.”

The municipality would not need to erect markers or headstones for persons having no known estate at municipal expense (18 V.S.A. § 5371) “unless the regulations governing a particular natural burial ground require a marker on a person’s grave...” The municipality has no say in whether or not a natural burial ground would require a marker.

The committee was attentive to most of the issues that local officials raised. H.25 is on the House Action Calendar for Tuesday, March 17. Local officials should contact their representatives to urge them to delete the mandate for municipalities to mark the perimeter of a privately held natural burial ground or to place a marker on a person’s grave in a natural burial ground under any circumstances. Inasmuch as these will be new and privately held burial grounds, the Department of Health should be authorized to require a reserve fund or contingency fund for maintenance of the natural burial ground should the developer go out of business.

The members of the General, Housing and Military Affairs Committee are:

Rep. Helen Head	Rep. Gabrielle Lucke
Rep. Thomas Stevens	Rep. Mary A. Morrissey
Rep. Brian K. Savage	Rep. Job Tate
Rep. Diana Gonzalez	Rep. Tommy Walz

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

Siting Electric Energy Facilities

For the most part, the legislature has ignored local officials’ dissatisfaction with the way the Public Service Board handles municipal determinations and recommendations regarding the location and development of energy facilities such as solar farms and wind turbines in its Certificate of Public Good (CPG) permitting process. This is despite the fact that the list of municipalities that report bad experiences with the process continues to grow as more and more renewable energy generation or energy transmission facilities are permitted in every corner of the state. Energy facilities are exempt from municipal zoning. [H.40](#), a bill that would eliminate the Sustainably Priced Energy Enterprise Development Program and create a Renewable Energy Standard and Energy Transformation Program for electric utilities, passed the House on Tuesday and is in the Senate Natural Resources and Energy

Committee.

Local governments support renewable energy and energy conservation. (See [Weekly Legislative Report No. 1](#).) They understand the need to reduce our carbon footprint and reliance on fossil fuels. Municipal governments have also spent considerable resources on developing land use plans that seek to accommodate their citizens' needs to live, interact, grow, innovate and prosper while also fostering the traditional landscape that is so valued in Vermont – i.e., compact settlements surrounded by rural countryside. When those efforts are discounted in a process that permits sometimes extremely large developments, not only is the landscape at risk, but it is not an exaggeration to say that the volunteer democratic form of government practiced in Vermont is also damaged. A balance must be established between the public need for renewable energy facilities and the need to appropriately site them in host municipalities.

VLCT addresses these issues in its 2015 Municipal Policy which, at Section 4.06E, says “Accord automatic party status to host municipalities in Section 248 proceedings. In every Certificate of Public Good process, the Public Service Board (PSB) should give “substantial consideration” to municipal determinations by holding hearings in municipalities that are potentially affected. The PSB should include all local determinations regarding the project within the PSB docket, formulate areas of inquiry based on concerns raised in local hearings, and ensure that the PSB decision addresses concerns raised in local hearings, determinations, and adopted municipal plans.”

So far this session, nine bills relating to siting of renewable energy facilities have been introduced in the House and two more in the Senate. H.276 was introduced by the chair of the House Natural Resources and Energy Committee, who assured local officials the committee would take up the issue of siting. VLCT staff worked closely with House legislators to address municipal concerns in H.377 as introduced. Local officials will have a chance to provide testimony to the Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee about siting energy facilities on Tuesday, March 24, from 6 to 8 p.m. in Room 11 at the State House. Please take the time to tell your legislators and committee members about your town's experiences as you work on energy elements of your town plan and how you are addressing energy proposals – be they wind, solar, or anything else. We will see you there!

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

Welcome, New Local Officials

Congratulations on your election to municipal office! There is much to do and to learn in your position, and we hope that you will turn to the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) to assist you with your new responsibilities. You can visit our website, www.vlct.org, to learn of the many services we provide to your municipality and to you. Our mission statement is “to serve and strengthen Vermont local government.”

One thing you will learn quickly is that your town or city does not operate as an island. The Vermont Constitution establishes local government as “creatures of the state.” State government has much to say about what your municipality can and cannot do (and, with state mandates, what it *must* do), and determines the resources with which you will be able to meet the service demands of your residents, businesses, visitors, and taxpayers. VLCT represents the interests of local government, but you are really the advocates who hold sway with your legislators. You have foreign policy obligations and you need to represent the interests of your town or city outside the municipal office – with your school district, neighboring local governments, county, regional commission, state administration, and the legislature.

The *Weekly Legislative Report* is VLCT's publication that communicates with municipal officials, but

it also keeps legislators, the governor's office, state agency heads, and the media informed about municipal legislative priorities. Each Friday during the legislative session we email or surface-mail it and post it on our website. The **Report** generally contains:

- analyses of key legislative developments during the past week;
- updates on any action on VLCT Municipal Policy priority bills;
- brief descriptions of bills introduced during the past week that affect municipal government and the committee to which the bill has been referred;
- calls for action on critical scheduled hearings and votes when municipal input is necessary; and
- periodic updates of federal issues of interest to municipal officials.

Newly elected officials will receive under separate cover a packet of information describing more of VLCT's services, including a new selectboard training on March 21 in Montpelier whose focus will be issues facing our smaller cities and towns.

In an effort to reduce printing, energy, and mailing costs, we are continuing our transition from an all-paper version of our *Weekly Legislative Report* to an electronic one. We post the *Report* [on our website](#) where back issues from the current biennium are also archived. We urge local officials to read it there via an email link we send to each subscriber. Many organizations have moved exclusively to electronic newsletters, including our affiliate in Washington D.C., the National League of Cities. VLCT's goal in the face of budget constraints and efforts to reduce our carbon footprint is to do likewise. If you request electronic notification of the *Report* (see below on how to do so), not only will you receive the latest news from Montpelier early Friday afternoon instead of having to wait for the snail mail, you also save your League the cost of printing and mailing a paper copy, and we all conserve resources. Electronic notification also gives you access to our email-only *Legislative Alerts* to help you better represent your municipality's interests in the legislative process. During the last frantic weeks of the session, it allows us to communicate rapidly unfolding legislative events. We do not have high-speed internet everywhere yet, so we provide the mailed version to many municipal offices without additional charge. Municipal officials who do not automatically receive the *Report* may subscribe to a paper copy for an annual \$40 fee.

VLCT emails the *Weekly Legislative Report* to all municipal officials for whom we have current email addresses. If you are a municipal official and did not receive this message or a copy of the *Report* directly, but want to receive it by email on Friday afternoons, please send an email message to wlr@vlct.org with "subscribe email" in the subject line. Include your name, municipality or organization, municipal position or title, and email address in the message. There is no charge for municipal officials to be added to the email distribution list.

All VLCT mailing lists, including email addresses, are public records. You can read the Statement of VLCT Communications as Public Records [here](#).

Please go green and read it on the screen!

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

Public Hearing on Consolidation of Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) Call Centers

The House and Senate Government Operations committees will hold a joint public hearing on Tuesday, March 17, 2015, in Room 11 at the Vermont State House. The Department of Public Safety is proposing to eliminate public safety dispatch services from Derby and Rutland, consolidating them in Williston and Rockingham. Please take this opportunity to testify to the House Government Operations Committee about what effects closing the Derby and Rutland call centers will have for public safety in those areas.

The Commissioner of Public Safety's presentation to the House Government Operations Committee is posted [here](#).

Public Hearing on Renewable Energy Siting

The Senate and House Natural Resources and Energy committees will hold a joint public hearing on renewable energy siting – with a focus on solar energy – on Tuesday, March 24, from 6 to 8 p.m. in Room 11 at the Vermont State House. The sign-up sheet for speaking at the hearing will be opened at 5:30 p.m. Speakers will be given two minutes and may also submit longer remarks, if desired, in writing.

Over the last decade, the legislature has made repeated commitments to renewable energy through statute, policy, and programs. As a result, we are increasingly seeing solar projects constructed in accordance with these statewide climate and energy goals. With regard to solar development and siting, how well is the current Public Service Board approval process working in terms of achieving the state's energy goals? Does it provide adequate consideration of the planning goals and preferences of individuals, municipalities, and regions? How does it integrate the needs of the state as a whole with the needs of individual communities or regions? How does it serve project developers? How could the process be improved?

The public is invited to participate in person or by writing to the committees. Whether speaking at the hearing or sending testimony, all participants are asked to email their remarks to Legislative Council member Katie Pickens (kpickens@leg.state.vt.us). The remarks will be posted on the committees' web pages.

NEW BILLS

BILL NUMBER	SUMMARY	CURRENT LOCATION
H.326	Would expand the aggravated murder statute to include the killing of a firefighter or an emergency medical provider.	House Judiciary
H.363	Would amend the Petroleum Cleanup Fund requirements in order to specify the amount of grants available from the Fund for different aboveground storage tanks or underground storage tanks. Would increase from \$350,000 to \$400,000 the amount of assistance the Secretary of Natural Resources may authorize from the Heating Fuel Account of the Fund for heating fuel tanks in any one fiscal year.	House Fish, Wildlife and Water Resources
H.365	Would provide homeowners with a variable homestead tax exemption to the education property tax and repeal the income sensitivity adjustment for homeowners.	House Ways and Means
H.367	Would change the requirement to adopt municipal land use plans from five to 10 years; allow plan amendments during this 10-year period without affecting the plan's expiration date; require a five-year interim review of the plan; require consultation with the regional planning commission at least twice during the 10-year period; and to clarify requirements for municipal plan amendments, updates, and reoption.	House Government Operations
H.368	(short form) Would make the sixth conviction of the same misdemeanor a felony punishable by not more than a three-year prison sentence or a \$3,000 fine, or both.	House Judiciary
H.369	Would remove health insurance benefits from the subjects for bargaining for teachers, administrators, and other school employees that are subject to a collective bargaining agreement. Would direct qualified school employers that want to offer health insurance coverage to their employees to purchase plans through the Vermont Health Benefit Exchange, specifying that school employers may purchase only health insurance plans that are not subject to the federal excise tax on high-cost, employer-sponsored health coverage.	House Gen., Housing and Military Affairs
H.375	Would establish standards for the use of ecological toilets, such as composting toilets, urine diverting dry toilets, incinerating toilets, or lined pit latrines. Would also require the Secretary of Natural Resources to adopt a general permit to authorize the use of greywater systems in the state.	House Fish, Wildlife and Water Resources
H.377	Would ensure that the Public Service Board gives great weight to the plans and recommendations of municipal and regional bodies when reviewing facilities subject to each its jurisdiction. Would also ensure that generation facilities are not represented to be "community" unless they meet specified criteria.	House Natural Resources & Energy
H.378	Would establish a common definition of "independent contractor" for the workers' compensation and unemployment insurance statutes.	House Gen., Housing and Military Affairs
H.380	Would make changes to the structure of education governance and finance through the creation of 15 consolidated administrative districts.	House Education
H.383	Would prohibit drivers from crossing double yellow lines on Vermont highways.	House Transportation
H.395	Would establish an excise tax on fossil fuels that emit greenhouse gases in order to reduce dependence on these fuels and ensure that the fuel price reflects external costs of greenhouse gas emissions. Would offset 80% of the revenues from this carbon pollution tax through a per-employee rebate to employers and a refundable tax credit to personal income taxpayers of middle and low income. The remaining 20% of the carbon pollution tax revenues would fund low-income weatherization and other thermal energy efficiency and a Vermont Sustainable Transportation Fund.	House Natural Resources & Energy
H.396	Would assign a permit specialist, on request of an applicant, to provide guidance and assistance to the applicant during the permit process; clarify that the Act 250 rules may provide an option for master plan review at the request of an applicant, rather than allowing a district commission to require such review; and require that, in an appeal from a district commission, the burden of proof is on the appellant.	House Natural Resources & Energy
H.406	Would extend the period required for towns to renew tax liens.	House Ways and Means

BILL NUMBER	SUMMARY	CURRENT LOCATION
H.412	Would establish an excise tax on fossil fuels that emit greenhouse gases in order to reflect external costs of greenhouse gas emissions in the price of these fuels and reduce fossil fuel use. Would offset 90% of the revenues from this carbon pollution tax through reduction of the sales and use tax, a refundable tax credit to personal income taxpayers, a low-income taxpayer rebate, and a per employee rebate to employers. The remaining 10% of the carbon pollution tax revenues would fund low-income weatherization and a Vermont Energy Independence Fund (VEIF). Would also amend the Clean Energy Development Fund to become the VEIF.	House Natural Resources & Energy
H.418	Would require a town to conduct an additional audit when the positions of town clerk and treasurer are held by the same individual.	House Government Operations
H.419	Would establish an expedited Act 250 permit review process for counties with high unemployment rates.	House Natural Resources & Energy
H.421	Would remove health insurance benefits from the bargainable subjects for public employees that are subject to a collective bargaining agreement and instead specify that employees who wish to have health insurance coverage may purchase plans through the Vermont Health Benefit Exchange.	House Government Operations
H.428	Would assess an environmental impact fee on a natural gas or electric utility that transmits power through any new transmission line that requires an encroachment permit under 29 V.S.A. chapter 11 for encroaching on Lake Champlain. The fee would be deposited in the Vermont Clean Water Fund.	House Natural Resources & Energy
H.430	Would require independent investigations when law enforcement action results in death or serious injury.	House Government Operations
H.434	Would establish a Training Safety Council to make recommendations regarding training safety at the Vermont Police Academy and the Vermont Fire Academy.	House Government Operations
H.435	Would create as a public instrumentality of the state a nonprofit corporation named the Office of Public Policy. The Office would provide independent, nonpartisan research and statistical analysis in order to recommend to the General Assembly — and to other entities with which the Office contracts — strategies to carry out policy objectives.	House Government Operations
H.437	Would lower the cap for income sensitivity adjustments from \$90,000 to \$75,000.	House Ways and Means
H.443	Would codify the obligations of persons who enjoy a common benefit from a class 4 town highway or public trail to contribute to maintenance costs of the highway or trail not borne by a municipality, in the absence of an agreement or requirement governing such maintenance obligations; and specify that a municipality shall not issue a municipal land use permit in connection with a property benefited by a class 4 town highway or a public trail unless the responsibility for maintenance costs not borne by the municipality is defined in a covenant or an agreement recorded in the municipal land records.	House Transportation
H.452	Would increase the voting requirement for school budgets that exceed the cap on per pupil education spending amounts.	House Education
H.453	Would permit the registration of independent marijuana testing facilities.	House Human Services
H.454	Would provide protections to owners of unblighted properties within blighted or slum areas undergoing condemnation.	House Government Operations
H.455	Would give greater weight to local and regional plans and the criteria of Act 250 in Public Service Board (PSB) siting review and to require that the PSB hear land use and environmental issues jointly with the Natural Resources Board.	House Natural Resources & Energy
H.458	Would automatically send a motor vehicle driver's license application to the Secretary of State for voter registration purposes.	House Transportation
H.459	Would permit an employer of a law enforcement employee to require that employee to take or submit to a drug test at random or if the employer has a reasonable suspicion that the employee is using or is under the influence of a drug.	House Government Operations

BILL NUMBER	SUMMARY	CURRENT LOCATION
H.464	Would require the Governor to consider and prioritize gender equality when making appointments to any board, commission, or similar entity.	House Gen., Housing and Military Affairs
H.465	Would broaden the requirement that a designated new town center contain civic and public buildings to allow the existence of green or open public space that promotes social interaction or community identity through civic uses such as farmers' markets, community concerts, and recreational sporting events to meet this requirement. Would exempt from Act 250 jurisdiction priority housing projects on lands within a designated growth center that were subject to Act 250 jurisdiction prior to growth center designation.	House Natural Resources & Energy
H.470	Would eliminate the requirement for a municipality to conduct a traffic and engineering investigation in order to establish a speed limit on a town highway or portions thereof that abut residential property; and authorize municipalities to restrict and regulate cut-through traffic on town highways.	House Government Operations
H.481	Would increase Exchange cost-sharing subsidies for individuals with incomes between 200 and 300 percent of the federal poverty level. (See article on page 2.)	House Ways and Means
S.124	Would expand the scope of practice of Level II certified law enforcement officers.	Senate Government Operations