

2022 Weekly Legislative Report #2

January 7, 2022

The Vermont Legislature opened the second half of the 2021-2022 biennium on Tuesday. Already, several dozen municipally-relevant bills have been introduced.

To read this report:

- Under "This Week's Articles," simply click on any of the article titles to have the article expand so you can read it.
- As the legislative session progresses, go to our [Legislative Reports page](#) to revisit this issue and find other weekly legislative reports.
- Here is a [PDF of the full report](#).

Karen Horn, VLCT Public Policy & Advocacy Director

Gwynn Zakov, VLCT Municipal Policy Advocate

David Gunn, Editor

VLCT Advocacy: advocacy@vlct.org

Legislators: legislature.vermont.gov

Sergeant-at-Arms: 802-828-2228

Please note: This January 7 issue was originally published as "2022 Weekly Legislative Report #1", which was an incorrect label. The 2022 Legislative Preview (published on December 20, 2021) was #1, so this issue has been renumbered to #2. The January 14 issue will be "2022 Weekly Legislative Report #3". We apologize for any confusion this change may cause.

[Keeping Track of Legislation](#)

On Tuesday, the legislature reconvened for the second half of the biennium. The first order of business of the House and Senate was determining how both chambers would meet, given the recent surge in COVID-19 cases as a result of the Omicron variant. At least for the

first two weeks of the session, the House will meet remotely. The Senate will meet remotely until February 25.

Remote live-streamed meetings certainly have made the legislature more accessible for most Vermonters who would not ordinarily be able to get to the State House on a regular basis. It is also true, of course, that what the public won't see are the private conversations which often determine the progress of a bill. Even with the increased transparency of committee meetings, following the progress of legislation can be daunting. The easy-to-navigate website of the [Vermont General Assembly](#) lists schedules for each committee meeting on Monday afternoons or Tuesday mornings. Merely click on the agenda link next to each committee for the week's meeting plan.

After the initial weekly posting, you will need to check for updates – which are frequent – to committee schedules on their individual webpages. These sites also list any meeting documents under discussion and written testimony. Importantly, versions of bills that have been amended in committee but not yet taken up on the floor of the House or Senate are also posted here. When you follow different versions of bills, be sure to pay attention to draft numbers at the top of each bill page.

Remember that this is the second year of the biennium. That means that while our weekly reports will continue to review the many new bills that affect local government, bills introduced last year are still viable this session. You can search for them on the Bill, Act, & Resolution Search webpage.

Also remember that your Advocacy staff is here for you. If you have any questions about legislation, please contact Gwynn Zakov (gzakov@vlct.org) or Karen Horn (khorn@vlct.org). And follow progress of legislation along with us in our Weekly Legislative Reports and on our biweekly Advocacy Chats. One more thing: When you contact your legislators with concerns or recommendations or if you are testifying, please let us know so we can support and amplify those messages!

Resources for this article:

- [All Scheduled Committee Meetings webpage](#)
- [Ways and Means Committee webpage](#)
- [Bill, Act, & Resolution webpage](#)

[Town Meeting 2022](#)

This session, the very first legislative action that the Senate Government Operations Committee and later the full Senate took was to pass [S.172](#). The bill, introduced on Tuesday, provides local legislative bodies the authority to vote to use Australian ballot for town meeting, even if they ordinarily have floor meetings, and to move town meeting to a safer date later in the year. These emergency provisions were in place for meetings in 2021 but that authority expired at the end of the year. S.172 makes clear that the authority applies only to town meeting 2022 and to meetings that result from it, such as a petition for a re-vote.

The bill also allows for a pre-town meeting informational meeting to be held by electronic means without designating a physical location. In that case, the municipality must use technology that permits the attendance of the public through electronic or other means, allows the public to access the hearing by telephone whenever feasible, records the meeting (unless impossible to do so), and posts information about how the public may access the meeting electronically and include that information in the published agenda.

Brattleboro, which holds the state's only representative town meeting, may also hold that meeting by electronic means, which the town successfully did in 2021.

S.172 makes it clear that a town may not use the temporary authority for Australian ballot voting to put an item on a ballot that asks voters to approve moving to Australian ballot for all future meetings.

The bill was voted out of the House Government Operations Committee this morning. An amendment was proposed that would modify the underlying general statute to require towns to mail ballots to all voters. It also would appropriate \$1 million from the General Fund to pay for that mailing. That amendment failed on the floor of the House, which then proceeded to unanimously pass the underlying bill with no changes from the Senate version.

S.172 now heads to the governor's desk, and we are assured he will sign it in short order. Our sincere thanks go to the legislature for its prompt action and for giving local officials the assurance they need to proceed with their town meeting plans.

[Temporary Open Meeting Law Procedures](#)

On June 15, 2021, Governor Scott's declared State of Emergency was lifted, and all temporary Open Meeting Law provisions that allowed public bodies to meet entirely remotely ended. Most local governments have chosen to continue with a hybrid model of meeting – where both an in-person and remote options for participation are offered. The Open Meeting

Law requires an in-person option – that is, a physical location where at least one member of the board or commission or a staff person is present – for all meetings. This model has worked well for many communities, but it has been challenging for others for a multitude of reasons. Given the exponential increase in COVID-19 cases in recent weeks the most pressing concern municipalities have is for the safety of participants during in-person meetings. Individuals who may be the only person at the designated meeting location have expressed and even experienced safety concerns as they are alone and vulnerable in buildings open to the general public with little to no security. Others are worried, about an increased exposure to COVID-19 (on Thursday, Vermont’s daily case count blew through 2,000 for the first time), since many buildings have outdated HVAC systems and meeting areas are often small and do not allow for social distancing.

In response to these concerns, the legislature responded with S.222. This bill passed out of the Senate Government Operations Committee yesterday, was passed by the full Senate today, and now heads to the House for consideration. It implements several provisions familiar to local officials, as they are replicated from temporary stipulations that were put in place when the pandemic began.

The Senate bill authorizes a meeting of a public body to be held fully remotely without needing to designate a physical meeting location. If a public body chooses to meet remotely, it must use technology that permits public attendance through electronic or other means and allows public access by telephone. The public body must also post information that enables the public to directly access and participate in the meeting and include it in the meeting’s agenda.

Municipal legislative bodies and school boards that meet remotely under these provisions must record their meetings, unless unusual circumstances make it impossible to do so. Minutes of the meeting must be posted not more than 10 calendar days from the date of the meeting. Meeting agendas or notices of a special meeting may be posted in in two designated electronic locations in lieu of the physical designated public places in the municipality, or in a combination of a designated electronic location and a designated public place. Notices and agendas must be posted in or near the municipal clerk’s office and must be provided to the newspapers of general circulation for the municipality.

The Senate committee proposed that the temporary authority expire next January. Since the legislature won’t meet during the summer and fall and the cycle of COVID-19 cases typically rises during the colder months, the expiration date extends until then when a new legislature

will be in place that can reassess the need for fully remote meetings in the future.

Readers should also note that local officials support the recommendation of the Vermont Climate Council in the Climate Action Plan to allow for remote meetings on a permanent basis. The committee is not prepared to take that discussion up in this bill given the current emergency circumstance.

Resource for this article:

- [S.222 text as introduced \(PDF\)](#)

[The State of the State for 2022](#)

On Wednesday, Governor Phil Scott delivered his State of the State address on Zoom to a virtual audience. Despite the current surge in COVID-19 cases and the general fatigue we all feel, he sought to strike a positive note and to energize legislators to address the most pressing challenges facing the 2022 legislative session. “I can report to you today that the state of the State is strong,” he said.

With unprecedented amounts of federal money on the table from the American Rescue Plan and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs acts, as well as state revenues running well ahead of projections, the governor focused on increasing the workforce and engaging that workforce to execute transformational change in Vermont. That means accomplishing most legislative priorities of investing in training, education, housing, and early child care; recruiting workers in a wide range of professions; the economic revitalization of Vermont’s cities and towns; recovery from the pandemic; and, oh yes, making the state more affordable for people who already live here and would like to stay.

Since 2010, the governor said, the Vermont workforce has decreased by nearly 30,000. He promised that his proposals will be geared toward workforce, “because whether it is training and recruitment, childcare, tax policy, housing, healthcare, infrastructure, or climate change, we must reverse our workforce trends.”

Scott cited successes in building permanent housing for the homeless and helping 1,300 families transition out of homelessness. However, Vermont has not had similar success with respect to workforce housing – the missing middle* – and he urged the legislature to approve \$80 million in the budget adjustment act and an additional \$100 million to address housing issues.

Among other topics related to local governments that the governor noted in his address are expanding the Capital Investment Grant Program – which was started with \$10 million but received requests for six times that amount – for enhancing facilities around the state; addressing the mental health and addiction crises that have been greatly exacerbated by the pandemic; and recognizing the progress made in accountability and modernization in law enforcement at the same time that the professions of police and first responders face acute labor shortages.

The agenda is ambitious. At least portions of it, such as reducing tax burdens, have already been flagged as tough sells in the State House. Readers should watch for the governor's budget address on January 18. In both that address and the subsequently released budget, the meat will be put on the bones of the agenda revealed in his State of the State address.

* The “missing middle” refers to a range of house-scale buildings, potentially with multiple units.

[Cannabis and the Cannabis Control Board](#)

Long before the 2022 session opened this week, the legislature was already discussing cannabis, including the pending retail marketplace that is anticipated to roll out this year. The Cannabis Control Board (CCB) has been hard at work trying to meet the aggressive – and unrealistic – timeline set forth in previous legislation that created the framework for a retail cannabis market in Vermont. As the CCB tries to undertake the huge responsibility of starting from scratch an entirely new and heavily regulated industry, the April deadline for when the board will begin to accept applications for opening a cannabis establishment is fast approaching.

There are five rules that outline the regulations that entities and government officials must follow within the legal market for cannabis and the CCB has issued three of them. Two of these rules are open for public comment until January 21. (See the Secretary of State's [Rules Portal](#).) The final three rules are posted on the [CCB's website](#) but have not been officially filed. Before the CCB begins receiving the first cannabis establishment license applications, it has a lot of work to do to be ready to initiate the regulated market as anticipated in Acts 164 (2020) and 62 (2021).

Last month, Brynn Hare, executive director of the CCB, testified before the House Appropriations Committee about the board's progress to date, and requested eleven new positions to enable the board to do its work. The cost of these positions over a twelve-month period would be close to \$1 million. The CCB is also requesting more budget adjustment

funding in order to fulfill its regulatory obligations. The legislature had anticipated fees generated from cannabis establishments would cover the CCB's operating expenses, but the CCB maintains that initial funding levels are not nearly enough to finance their operations until the collection of fees begins with receipt of license applications in the spring.

The House committee expressed reservations about using the budget adjustment process to bridge the financial gap the CCB is experiencing. But without additional funding, the goal of fully implementing Act 164 and 62 within its current timeline is clearly unrealistic.

This week, the House Ways and Means Committee also heard from Ms. Hare about the fee proposals that accompany the cannabis program. The committee will review these proposals in the coming weeks because final fee levels need to be approved by the legislature prior to the April deadline.

Separate from the concerns of the CCB but of import to local officials is a bill submitted by Senator Jeanette White: [S.152](#), which addresses local cannabis fees and tax revenue allocations to municipalities. The Vermont Legislature, led by the House Ways and Means Committee, has refused to share any cannabis tax revenue with local governments or allow local governments to access even a small local cannabis tax. The legislature even went so far as to strip the ability of municipalities to attach fees to local cannabis license applications. S.152 proposes to remedy those shortcomings of the current law. The bill would distribute an amount of the state's cannabis excise tax revenues that is equal to four percent of the taxable retail sales to municipalities that host a cannabis establishment. It would also repeal the board's authority to charge and collect local fees and return that authority to towns and cities as it relates to cannabis retail and integrated licensees. VLCT is grateful that the Senate – and in particular, Senator White – understands the needs of local governments and relentlessly advocates for a protected and secure revenue stream from the cannabis market.

The legislature will certainly spend ample time this session on cannabis issues, and local officials should be vocal with their representatives and senators during this time. Let them know what you need from both the legislature and the CCB to be fully prepared to begin accepting cannabis licenses – as early as May this year – and to begin hosting all manner of cannabis establishments, be they retail, manufacturing, wholesale, testing laboratories or cultivators.

Resource for this article:

- [Cannabis Control Board Testimony to House Appropriations Committee](#), Dec. 17, 2021

Municipal Land Records

Of note to all municipal clerks and selectboards is a bill in House Commerce and Economic Development that looks to overhaul all aspects of the state's land records system. H.512 is a bill crafted by bankers, credit unions, attorneys, and title issuers across the state and it very much reads like one since the concerns of municipal and state government are not taken into account. The overarching goal of the legislation – to modernize the state's system of land records – is certainly worthwhile. The bill's approach, however, simply won't work without significant restructuring within the Secretary of State's Office and at the municipal level. For example, no new funding sources have been identified to pay for this modernization proposal.

The bill proposes that the state create a Land Records Management Office within the Secretary of State's Office to oversee and implement the modernization of municipal land records. The office would use modern methods, techniques, equipment, documentation, and training to do this. Among other things, the office would research and provide technical assistance and services on all aspects of land records management including centralizing and computerizing recording systems and land records. The office would also develop and enforce rules and regulations, which would need to be adopted by July 1, 2023.

Both the Secretary of State's Office and the Vermont Municipal Clerks' and Treasurers' Association oppose the bill as introduced. The Secretary of State and the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration have an alternative proposal that is more measured and realistic to modernizing how land records are managed in across the state. It recommends enacting two uniform laws by the nationally recognized and nonpartisan Uniform Law Commission: the Uniform Real Property Electronic Recording Act and the newest Revised Uniform Law on Notarial Acts. The alternative proposal also recommends adding one full-time position within the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration to assist municipalities and those managing state land records.

The committee will likely take up the bill early in the session.

Taxes – The Revenue Committees Have a Full Plate

This week, both the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee got right to work as they heard from Senator Ruth Hardy and Representative Emilie Kornheiser, the co-chairs of the Pupil Weighting Task Force, about the task force's

final report. Both committees also heard from Tax Commissioner Craig Bolio about the December 1 Education Tax Rate letter to the Speaker of the House and the Senate President Pro Tempore along with the administration's proposal to return \$45 million of the Education Fund's \$90 million surplus to taxpayers. While that might generally be accomplished by reducing education property tax rates, an alternative proposal is to actually return the money to tax payers. The commissioner acknowledged that the administration would need considerable assistance from municipalities towns to accomplish such a feat, and that they have not begun those conversations.

The House Ways and Means Committee also heard from Jill Remick, the Director of Property Valuation and Review, about an Equalization Study required by legislation last year and the impact of COVID-19 on property values and the common level of appraisal (CLA), the mechanism by which the state ensures that education grand lists do not significantly fall below or rise above statewide fair market values.

Janet Ancel, Chair of the Ways and Means Committee, and Rep. Scott Beck introduced a bill, that would implement a concept they have discussed for several years. H.514, which has not yet been taken up, would eliminate locally voted local option sales and use taxes. It would establish a share of state sales and use tax revenue that would be distributed to all municipalities – effectively a state revenue sharing program. While a reliable revenue sharing program would be most welcome, it must not come at the expense of local option sales taxes in those communities that have adopted them. Local officials, particularly those from towns and cities with voter adopted and legislatively approved local option sales taxes, should watch closely for this legislation to be taken up.

The Pupil Weighting Task Force Report of 2019 represents a fairly comprehensive overhaul of Vermont's K-12 education funding system while “preserving the equity already embedded in the current system.” A key concern of the report was to develop a smooth transition to new financing mechanisms.

The report recommended applying new weights and cost factors to Vermont's education funding formula that rebalances the formula in light of the need to address students living in poverty, English language learners, rural areas and school size, and middle and secondary schools. It presented two options for implementing corrections to the current pupil weighting construct: (1) apply new weights in a system that automatically adjusts per-pupil Education Fund payments, and (2) use those new weights to adopt a general set of cost equity payments. The task force prefers the second option, which would need to be recalibrated by

the legislature on a regular basis.

The task force also recommended a number of other changes including:

- eliminating pupil weights for English language learners and providing targeted funding to all schools that would be spent on services for English language learners;
- changing the measure for counting students in poverty;
- transitioning to a new pupil weighting system over five years;
- suspending the spending threshold during those years and using Education Fund surpluses to smooth the transition; and
- for the 30 percent of Vermonters who pay homestead education property taxes, replacing homestead property taxes for education with a unified local income tax system as recommended by the Tax Structure Commission.

The taskforce co-chairs acknowledged that a lot of work remains to be done to flesh out the proposals in the report.

This session promises to be a wild one in the revenue committees. Still to come is a required report on fees assessed to support state programs, along with many other issues, some new and some to be revisited. As the session proceeds, we'll provide updates on all these issues and many more that specifically affect local governments.

Resources for this article:

- [Pupil Weighting Task Force Recommendations Overview](#)
- [Task Force on the Implementation of the Pupil Weighting Factors Report](#)
- [Education Tax Rate Letter to Rep. Krowinski and Sen. Balint, Dec. 1, 2021](#)
- [Tax Department Equalization Study Presentation, Jan. 6, 2022](#)
- [Division of Property Valuation Annual Report](#)

[New Bills of Municipal Interest](#)

Bill**Number****Summary of New Bills****Current
Location**[H.460](#)

Would limit the requirement that public cemeteries be fenced to instances in which there is livestock on the adjoining property.

House
Government
Operations

[H.461](#)

Would amend the definition of household for the purposes of the homestead property tax credit in order to exclude the income of asylum seekers, asylees, and refugees from household income.

House Ways and
Means

[H.462](#)

Would rename the Department of Health's Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs the Division of Substance Use Programs; require pharmacies with ten or more outlets to host a drug disposal kiosk; enable the Health Department to share de-identified data produced by the Child Fatality Review Team with similar review teams in other states; and require the Chief Medical Officer to provide autopsy reports to both federal prosecutors and prosecutors from other states upon written request.

House Human
Services

[H.465](#)

Would amend statutes relating to the state's boards and commissions, including the repeal of the Study Committee on Sales and Use Tax; the Committee on Enhancing Vermont's Software and Information Technology Economy; the Youth in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Food Production Consortium; and the Working Group on State Workforce Development.

House
Government
Operations

[H.466](#)

Would regulate surface water withdrawals and interbasin transfers of surface water occurring in the state.

House Nat.
Resources, Fish,
and Wildlife

<u>H.467</u>	Would extend the baseload renewable power portfolio requirement until 2032 unless the baseload renewable power plant does not utilize at least 40% of its energy.	House Energy and Technology
<u>H.470</u>	Would permit referral of domestic violence, sexual violence, or stalking cases to a community justice center as of July 1, 2023, provided the center has adopted victim safety standards and protocols that take into consideration victim needs such as safety, confidentiality, and privacy.	House Judiciary
<u>H.473</u>	Would clarify that a person may use deadly force to stop another person from committing murder, sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault, burglary, or robbery if the person reasonably believed the deadly force was necessary to repel imminent peril to the person.	House Judiciary
<u>H.483</u>	Would require the Agency of Education to identify and offer potential new models of funding and governance structures to improve the quality, duration, and access to career technical education in Vermont.	House Education
<u>H.490</u>	Would prohibit an individual from running for more than one elected office at one time or holding more than one elected office at any time.	House Government Operations
<u>H.491</u>	Would create the City of Essex Junction and approve the adoption of the city charter; provide for the transition of the Village of Essex Junction to the City of Essex Junction, including the city's contribution to consolidated services with the Town of Essex; and repeal the charter of the Village of Essex Junction.	House Government Operations

<u>H.492</u>	<p>Would change the name of the Natural Resources Board to the Environmental Review Board and give it the authority to hear appeals from district commissions and district coordinators in addition to the board's current duties. The Environmental Division of the Superior Court would continue to hear appeals from other environmental permits, enforcement, and local zoning appeals.</p>	<p>House Nat. Resources, Fish, and Wildlife</p>
<u>H.494</u>	<p>Would amend occupational licensing regulations, add a state income tax credit, and require the Agency of Education to propose a funding source for the Vermont Strong Scholars Initiative.</p>	<p>House Government Operations</p>
<u>H.501</u>	<p>Would require the Secretary of Natural Resources to adopt standards for the allowable levels of physical contaminants in residual waste, digestate, and soil amendments sold or land applied in the state.</p>	<p>House Nat. Resources, Fish, and Wildlife</p>
<u>H.504</u>	<p>Would require the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets to submit to the General Assembly a report regarding the reorganization, enhancement, and enforcement of animal welfare requirements in the state, including the establishment of an animal welfare division at the agency.</p>	<p>House Agriculture and Forestry</p>
<u>H.507</u>	<p>Would amend (increase) certain civil process fees of sheriffs' departments.</p>	<p>House Ways and Means</p>
<u>H.508</u>	<p>Would refund education property tax overpayments made by the City of Barre in fiscal years 2016-2019 due to a miscalculation of the amount of tax increment to be retained by the city from its Tax Increment Financing District fund.</p>	<p>House Ways and Means</p>
<u>H.509</u>	<p>Would clarify the jurisdiction of Act 250 in a town without permanent zoning and subdivision bylaws.</p>	<p>House Nat. Resources, Fish, and Wildlife</p>

<u>H.511</u>	<p>Would change the requirements for designated neighborhood development areas and new town centers, change the definition of “priority housing projects,” and change Act 250’s floodway criteria. It would also require hiring a consultant to review the state designated centers program and file a report on proposed updates.</p>	<p>House Nat. Resources, Fish, and Wildlife</p>
<u>H.512</u>	<p>Would establish the Lands Record Management Office in the Secretary of State’s Office and enact the Revised Uniform Law on Notarial Acts and the Uniform Real Property Electronic Recording Act.</p>	<p>House Government Operations</p>
<u>H.514</u>	<p>Would create a uniform local share of sales and use tax revenue for all municipalities and repeal the existing local option tax relating to the sales and use tax. The distribution to municipalities of the local share revenue would be based on an allocation formula that takes into account the destination of each taxable sale and may include other factors. Would apply a local share at a uniform percentage to generate revenues sufficient to fund the state Payment in Lieu of Taxes that are substantially equivalent to revenues currently raised by municipalities with an existing local option tax.</p>	<p>House Ways and Means</p>
<u>H.518</u>	<p>Would establish the Municipal Fuel Switching Grant Program, administered by Efficiency Vermont and the Department of Buildings and General Services through the State Energy Management Program, to provide technical assistance and award grants and loans to municipalities for replacing fossil fuel heating systems with renewable and efficient heating systems.</p>	<p>House Energy and Technology</p>
<u>H.523</u>	<p>Would adopt new policies regulating the use and disposal of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) in order to more rapidly reduce their emission.</p>	<p>House Nat. Resources, Fish, and Wildlife</p>
<u>H.524</u>	<p>Would eliminate the ability of towns to adopt certain zoning provisions, including setbacks, parking requirements, large lot requirements, and single-family zoning.</p>	<p>House Nat. Resources, Fish, and Wildlife</p>

<u>H.533</u>	<p>Would convert civil seizure and forfeiture of property related to drug crimes into a criminal process where the forfeiture of property is an available criminal sanction. Would prohibit state and local law enforcement from sharing in proceeds forfeited under federal law except for cases involving more than \$100,000.</p>	House Judiciary
<u>H.537</u>	<p>Would require all individuals five years of age and older to wear a mask or cloth face covering in public indoor spaces, subject to limited exceptions, in counties in which the CDC indicate a “high” or “substantial” community transmission level.</p>	House Human Services
<u>H.541</u>	<p>Would direct the Center for Crime Victims Services to establish the Victims Services Advisory Council to bring service providers, crime victims, and survivors together to improve public policy for and optimize the provision of services to victims and survivors of crime.</p>	House Judiciary
<u>H.542</u>	<p>Would require establishment of a riparian protection area adjacent to each stream in the state. Would prohibit a person from creating cleared area or constructing impervious surface within such an area unless permitted by the Secretary of Natural Resources or allowed as a use under the act.</p>	House Nat. Resources, Fish, and Wildlife
<u>H.543</u>	<p>Would establish as policy that wetlands are to be regulated and managed by the State to produce a net gain of wetlands acreage. Would require the Secretary of Natural Resources to amend the Vermont Wetlands Rules to incorporate the net gain policy and require the Vermont Significant Wetlands Inventory maps to be updated and revised annually.</p>	House Nat. Resources, Fish, and Wildlife
<u>H.546</u>	<p>Would create the Division of Racial Justice Statistics within the Agency of Administration.</p>	House Judiciary

<u>H.548</u>	<p>Would amend the list of prohibited cannabis products; allow cannabidiol derived from hemp to be added to cannabis products; exempt solid concentrates, oils, and tinctures from the 50 mg THC limit per package; permit an applicant to hold more than one testing laboratory license; prohibit dispensaries from manufacturing concentrated cannabis by chemical extraction or synthesis using butane or hexane; and limit the time period that dispensaries may cultivate cannabis for the purpose of transferring it to an integrated licensee.</p>	House Judiciary
<u>H.551</u>	<p>Would prohibit covenants in deeds that purport to restrict the ownership of property on the basis of race or religion and to establish a process for the removal of such covenants from deeds.</p>	House Judiciary
<u>H.552</u>	<p>Would define fuel cell electric vehicle (FCEV) and zero-emission vehicle (ZEV); appropriate money for the Better Connections program, Better Places program, Incentive Program for New PEVs, MileageSmart, emissions repair vouchers, Replace Your Ride, electric bicycle incentives, and the Mobility and Transportation Innovation Grant Program; and establish and appropriate money for an expanded electric vehicle supply equipment grant program, a pedestrian safety pilot program, and a ZEV school bus and public transit grant program.</p>	House Transportation
<u>S.152</u>	<p>Would distribute an amount of the cannabis excise tax revenues equal to 4% of the taxable retail sales to municipalities that host a cannabis establishment, repeal the Cannabis Control Board's authority to charge and collect local fees, and authorize local cannabis control commissions to assess a fee for a local control license issued to a cannabis retailer or integrated licensee.</p>	Senate Finance
<u>S.155</u>	<p>Would reorganize public safety services within the Executive Branch and create the Agency of Public Safety.</p>	Senate Government Operations

<u>S.167</u>	<p>Would modernize telecommunications policy to ensure that by the end of 2029, every E-911 business and residential location in Vermont has infrastructure capable of delivering internet access with service that has a minimum download speed of 100 Mbps and is symmetrical.</p>	Senate Finance
<u>S.168</u>	<p>Would limit the requirement that public cemeteries be fenced to instances in which the adjoining property has livestock on it.</p>	Senate Government Operations
<u>S.169</u>	<p>Would refund education property tax overpayments made by the City of Barre in fiscal years 2016-2019 due to a miscalculation of the amount of tax increment retained by the city from its Tax Increment Financing District Fund. Would also authorize the Secretary of Education to refund a municipality or school district an overpayment of education property tax when the overpayment was caused by error or miscalculation, provided the secretary annually reports to the General Assembly all anticipated refunds to municipalities or school districts prior to issuance.</p>	Senate Finance
<u>S.170</u>	<p>Would transfer the membership of certified law enforcement officers and support staff employed at county sheriff departments from the Vermont State Employees' Retirement System to the Municipal Employees' Retirement System.</p>	Senate Government Operations
<u>S.171</u>	<p>Would codify a State code of ethics in 3 V.S.A. chapter 31 that would apply to all "public servants," that is, persons elected or appointed to serve as officers of the State, persons elected or appointed to serve as members of the General Assembly, State employees, persons appointed to serve on State boards and commissions, and persons who in any other way are authorized to act or speak on behalf of the State.</p>	Senate Government Operations

<u>S.172</u>	By vote of the municipal legislative body, would authorize municipalities to apply the Australian ballot system to the municipality's 2022 annual meeting, and move the date of the municipality's 2022 annual meeting to a potentially safer date later in the year.	Senate Government Operations
<u>S.174</u>	Would allow the State and its political subdivisions to publish public notices on electronic news media and define "electronic news media" for purposes of notice by publication.	Senate Government Operations
<u>S.176</u>	Would require voter approval of water rates that are set by a separate municipal corporation outside the municipality where the vote is to be held, and are based on the appraised or assessed value of the property to be served.	Senate Government Operations
<u>S.180</u>	Would permit the aggregate value of stolen property to be used to satisfy the \$900 threshold that determines whether a crime is grand larceny or petit larceny, and felony retail theft or misdemeanor retail theft.	Senate Judiciary
<u>S.181</u>	Would make miscellaneous amendments related to the regulatory authority of municipal corporations to authorize the legislative body of a municipality to adopt ordinances governing the installation of sidewalks, the implementation of traffic-calming measures, the location and installation of storm drains, property management standards, the maintenance of vacant or blighted property, and the removal of damaged or leaking boats from bodies of water. Would authorize municipalities to vote by Australian ballot to revert from charter-specific authority to authority delegated in later-enacted general law, elect nonresidents to town offices, add members to the municipal legislative body, eliminate the office of constable, and recall local officials.	Senate Government Operations
<u>S.182</u>	Would prohibit the ownership and operation of paramilitary training camps in Vermont.	Senate Judiciary

<u>S.185</u>	<p>Would amend the list of prohibited cannabis products; allow cannabidiol derived from hemp to be added to cannabis products; exempt solid concentrates, oils, and tinctures from the 50 mg THC limit per package; permit an applicant to hold more than one testing laboratory license; prohibit dispensaries from manufacturing concentrated cannabis by chemical extraction or chemical synthesis using butane or hexane; and limit the time period that dispensaries may cultivate cannabis for the purpose of transferring it to an integrated licensee. (Identical to H.548)</p>	Senate Judiciary
<u>S.190</u>	<p>Would require the Agency of Transportation to work with affected municipalities on replanting trees when trees are removed from the state highway right-of-way and require additional landscaping and streetscaping in areas along state highways.</p>	Senate Transportation
<u>S.200</u>	<p>Would allow a municipality to apply for a master plan permit for its designated downtown development districts and neighborhood development areas, and allow municipalities to receive grants to assist them in applying for master plan permits.</p>	Senate Natural Resources and Energy
<u>S.203</u>	<p>Would amend occupational licensing, workers' compensation, and unemployment insurance requirements; to add a State income tax credit; and to appropriate funds for the Vermont Strong Scholars Loan Forgiveness Program.</p>	Senate Government Operations
<u>S.210</u>	<p>Would improve rental housing health and safety and expand opportunities for affordable housing.</p>	Senate Econ. Development, Housing and General Affairs
<u>S.212</u>	<p>Would simplify the Vermont education funding model and transition from a property-based tax to an income-based tax and create an education tax that is based on the income of all Vermont residents (both homeowners and renters) with a rate determined by locally voted budgets.</p>	Senate Finance

<u>S.215</u>	Would establish an annual gross receipts tax on cannabis wholesales.	Senate Finance
<u>S.218</u>	Would amend the Open Meeting Law to expressly state that the public bodies of the State and its political subdivisions may not prohibit or discourage the participation of a person or group of persons based on race or other classification.	Senate Government Operations
<u>S.222</u>	Would authorize temporary Open Meeting Law procedures until January 15, 2023. (See Temporary Open Meeting Law Procedures article.)	Passed Senate