

Advocacy Updates: Public Safety and Transportation

VLCT has identified public safety and transportation as a key topic to follow during the 2024 legislative session. Check back for the latest updates on this issue. Or, view our [Weekly Legislative Reports](#) page to see everything we're following.

Update coming soon! When updating our Advocacy Update webpages, we are giving priority coverage to the topic(s) that are currently being shaped and voted on.

[More Town Highway Aid Advances in Key House Committees; Public Safety Bills Gain Momentum – Mar 15, 2024](#)

House Transportation Budget Increases Town Highway Aid

As mentioned in the Transportation section of [What Governor Scott's Proposed Budget Means for Municipalities](#), funding for the Town Highway program was up 6%, exceeding Governor Scott's baseline budget growth of 3.6% for fiscal year 2025 (FY25). It was a small increase, but it reached a new milestone of over \$100M in town highway aid.

The House Transportation Committee advanced [H.868](#) (the FY25 Transportation Budget) on a vote of 11 to 0, and the House Appropriations Committee approved H.868 on March 14 by a unanimous vote of all present committee members. The [House Transportation Committee budget](#) increased the Town Highway Structures program by \$1M and the general Town Highway Aid program by \$860,000, bringing total town highway aid to \$102.5M, the largest budget in history. The largest increases over the FY24 budget are a 21.9% increase in the Town Highway Bridge program, bringing its total to \$45.3M, and a 13.5% increase in the Town Highway Structures program, bringing its total to \$8.4M. The full House should vote on H.868 next week. Be sure to thank your representative on the [House Transportation](#) and [House Appropriations](#) Committees.

Progress on Public Safety Bills

Several commonsense bills focused on public safety are gaining momentum as crossover — the deadline for bills to pass out of committee of jurisdiction — approaches.

- [H.534](#), a bill aimed at [reducing retail theft](#), passed the full house on March 14 and will now be considered in the Senate Judiciary Committee.
- [H.563](#), a bill that establishes penalties for attempted auto theft, passed the full House in February and is also being considered in the Senate Judiciary Committee.
- [S.196](#), a bill that would permit evidence to be considered in bail hearings, is noticed for a final vote in the Senate. This bill aims to better account for threats of physical violence in bail hearings.
- We continue to watch and hope that [S.195](#), a bill that would consider recent pending charges against a defendant in imposing conditions of release, advances or is included one of the public safety bills already advancing.

In addition, we continue to keep an eye on [H.72](#), a bill that authorizes safe injection or overdose prevention sites. Currently the bill contains a provision that gives municipalities the ability to “opt-in” to hosting one of the two pilot sites funded with \$2M that has been set aside for the establishment, management, and staffing of these new facilities. Some senators are reportedly in support of removing the opt-in provision for municipalities. **Please let [your senators](#) know that municipalities want a say in the location and siting of safe injection or overdose prevention facilities.**

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