

February 18, 2025

**Testimony to Senate
Transportation Committee
Regarding S.4 and S.29,
2/18/25**



Testimony of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns
Josh Hanford, Director, Intergovernmental Affairs
and Samantha Sheehan, Municipal Policy and Advocacy Specialist
to the Senate Transportation Committee
February 18, 2025

VLCT Supports S.4, an Act Relating to the Maintenance and Use of Legal Trails

Forty-five municipal responses to voluntary survey of communities with legal trails:

- 44 are actively maintaining them for public use
- 33 are maintaining trails in coordination with volunteer groups
- 70% are open to bikes, 60% open to snowmobiles, 40% open to ATVs



- Maintenance costs are shared by municipalities, non-profits, landowners and businesses

Protect Access to Municipal Legal Trails

Municipalities invest public resources in maintaining legal trails to clear brush and trees, provide signage, grading, ditching, and more. The 45 municipalities that responded to our survey account for a total of 547.22 miles of legal town trails.

- Stowe: 10.8 miles
- Hardwick: 2.62 miles
- Strafford: 10.45 miles
- Cabot: 18.2 miles

S.29 Chloride Contamination Reduction Program

- Municipalities are aligned with efforts to reduce environmental impacts and expense from spreading salt.
- Any program must be voluntary.
- Support for implementation and funding for compliance and oversight would increase participation.



- New Hampshire differentiates between municipal and commercial applicators for their Green Snow Program, municipal requirements are modified, and the program provides template salt reduction plans.

Municipalities Lack Underlying Liability Protection

VLCT is reluctant to discuss plans to cut down on chloride without commensurate action to limit liability.

- VLCT supports [H.138](#) to provide municipalities a monetary cap for liability in parity with the State of Vermont.
- Since 2011: The maximum liability of the State under Sec. 1. 12 V.S.A. chapter 189 is \$500,000.00 to any one person and a maximum aggregate liability of \$2,000,000.00 to all persons for each occurrence.
- Liability protection would apply to school districts.
- Would not affect suits related to criminal conduct or violations of civil liberty.

Attachments

[sen-transportation-s.4-and-s.29.pdf](#)

