

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](#)

