

March 14, 2025

**Testimony to the House  
Environment Committee on  
H.479, 3/12/25**

March 12, 2025

## Vermont League of Cities and Towns An Act Related to Housing

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**Testimony to ...**

**Regarding [H.479](#), An Act Related to Housing**

**Samantha Sheehan, Municipal Policy and Advocacy Specialist, VLCT**

**March 12, 2025**

## **Municipal Zoning Appeals**

VLCT supports efforts to enable the development of housing that communities have envisioned, planned for, and allow.

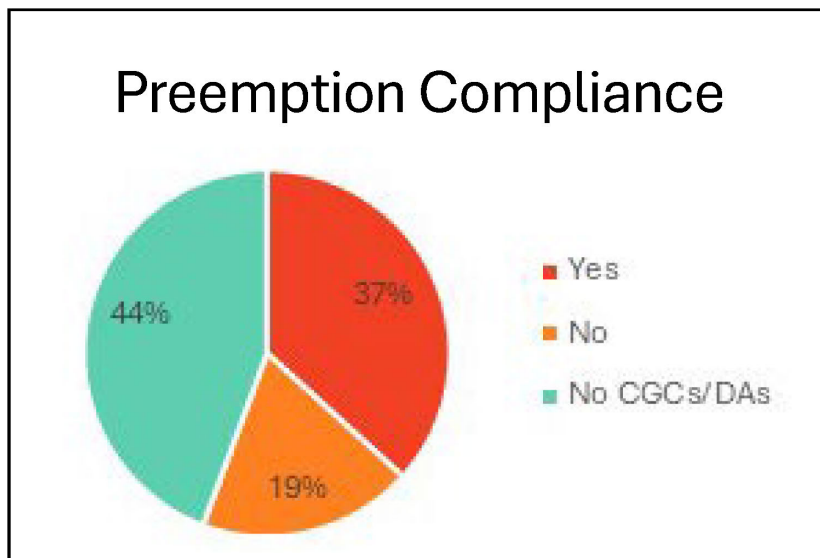
- This bill does not change appeals for denial of a municipal permit
- Administrative appeals require particular injury, removes petitioner appeals
- For appeals of decision by a municipal body, requires a decision 90 days from hearing and prioritizes hearings for appeals related to housing developments



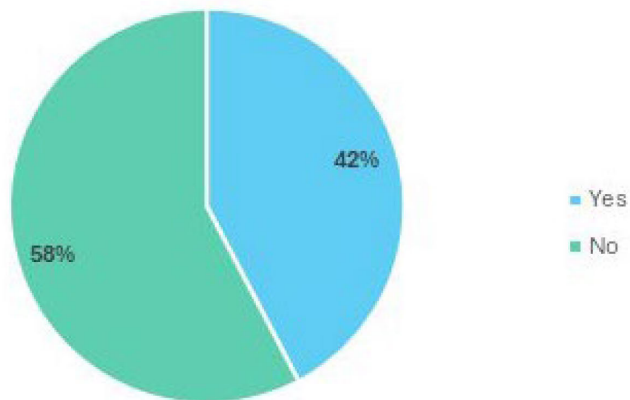
- VLCT supports further amendments to constrict standing for appeals to a decision by a municipal body
- Accelerates LURB Act 250 Appeals Study

## Municipal Zoning Preemptions

VLCT supports the **option** to adopt zoning preemptions without a hearing. Municipalities are on track to implement Act 47 & Act 181, with only 13% of survey respondents reporting they have “not started”. Reasons include: other priorities, lack of Technical Assistance, lack of funding.



## Minimum Provisions Exceeded



## \$2.5 Million for Brownfields Reuse

- Funding for Brownfield Reuse is a legislative priority for VLCT
- Brownfield funding was a successful use of State ARPA funds
- The bill would also direct a study for efficiency and improvement of the program (Related, Land Bank Study)
- Consistent with prior legislative action to promote housing density and redevelopment within designated areas
- Consider appropriations above \$2.5 million



## Local Option Tax for Short Term Rental

VLCT supports expanded authority to tax and regulate STRs at the local level.

- The various housing market impacts and economic development opportunities presented by the Short Term Rental market vary community to community
- Why not just use a Rooms Tax?
- All Meals & Rooms LOT adopted before FY26 were established through charter and likely obligate those revenues
- Traditional lodging businesses contribute other state and local revenues and benefits
- The regulation of STR's create a municipal resource challenge:
- Fire inspection & Public Safety demands
- Registration, Compliance
- Wastewater permitting vs. Occupancy

## Infrastructure Needs



In VLCT's membership survey last October, 35 municipalities reported that they currently have plans to build or expand municipal water or sewer systems. From those 35 projects:

- 28% have received some state funding, 16% have received some federal funding.
- The average total cost for the project is about \$14 million, the median is about \$10.2 million
- Anticipated date of completion from 2025 to 2030
- Total anticipated costs from all survey respondents is \$393,871,000 and the funding secured to date is \$151,912,000.

That means that Vermont needs to find over **\$240 million** just to meet expected costs for local infrastructure projects underway.

## **\$15 Million Infrastructure Sustainability Fund**

- VLCT supports investments for municipal infrastructure to enable housing
- Eligible activities: VLCT survey found the top three needs for funding assistance were construction, planning and design, and project management (including finance/grants management)
- Consider expanded geographic application criteria, such as settlement areas, villages, fire districts



- **Consider investment above \$9.1 million**

Attachments

[Presentation used by Samantha Sheehan during her testimony](#)

