

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

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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



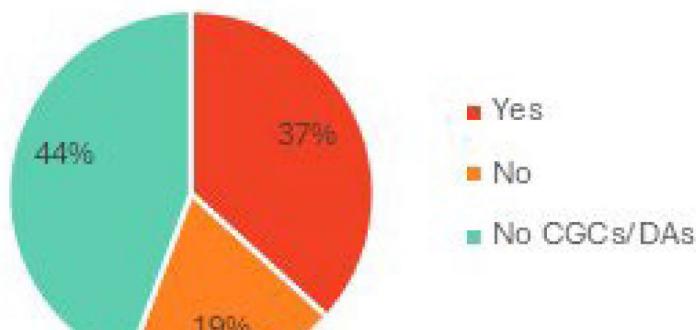
- Accelerates LURB Act 250 Appeals Study

Municipal Zoning Preemptions

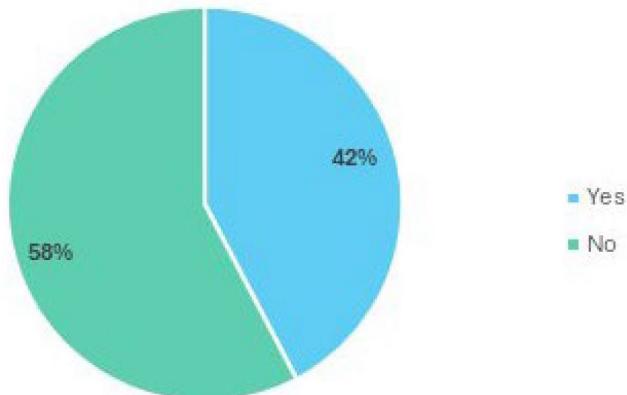
VLCT supports the **option** to adopt zoning preemptions without a hearing.

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.

Preemption Compliance



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](#)

