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[Home](#) > S.106, a Pilot Program for Self-Governance Authority, Voted out of Committee

S.106, a Pilot Program for Self-Governance Authority, Voted out of Committee

Did you feel the earth move under your feet yesterday?

On Tuesday, March 19, the Senate Government Operations Committee **unanimously** voted out [S.106](#) [1], the bill to establish a pilot program for self-governance authority at the local level. Thanks to the committee's diligent work, cities and towns have, for the first time in more than 100 years, the opportunity to develop innovative solutions to local problems, implement them in an efficient manner, and strengthen the partnership between state and local government.

S.106 recognizes local officials' top legislative priority adopted at VLCT's annual meeting in 2018: to support decision-making at the local level that recognizes the capacity of local officials and voters to govern themselves on issues of local import.

It is crucial for you to contact your senators and urge them to support S.106. Give your city or town the opportunity to put into practice innovative solutions to the many issues you face and demonstrate that they can succeed in this program!

As S.106 was voted out of committee, it would:

- establish a five-year pilot program to allow up to ten cities or towns to make a proposal for self-governance within the territorial boundaries of their municipality;
- create a 12-member Municipal-Self Governance Commission that would recommend participating pilot program towns and cities representing a range of populations, geographic locations, and governance structures, to the legislature;
- allow applicant cities and towns to develop a proposal for self-governance that does not conflict with the U.S. or Vermont constitutions or federal laws and listed state laws (such as crimes and criminal procedure, public records, open meeting, banking, securities and insurance) and that provides for the health, safety, and welfare of the applicant's population.

A process that gives comfort to potential skeptics and opportunity to participating cities and towns is important to ensure the success of the program. An applicant city or town would hold two public

hearings, present its proposal to the voters, and, upon voter approval, submit the proposal to the Municipal Self-Governance Commission.

The commission would establish criteria for evaluating proposals, and then review, evaluate, and make recommendations on proposals from up to ten cities or towns to the General Assembly.

The General Assembly would act to approve the recommended proposals and admit municipalities to participate in the Municipal Self Governance Program.

A municipality that was approved to participate in the program would be authorized to adopt or amend any ordinance pursuant to the powers granted in the approved proposal.

Read the entire bill [here](#) [2].

[Contact your senators](#) [3] today to urge their support of S.106, or leave a message with the Sergeant at Arms at 802-828-2228.

VLCT strongly advocated for this proposal and we can answer any questions you may have. Please contact [Karen Horn](#) [4] or [Gwynn Zakov](#) [5]. Thank you!



Links

[1] <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/S.106>

[2] <https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2020/WorkGroups/Senate%20Government%20Operations/Bills/S.106/Drafts,%200Amendments%20and%20Summaries/S.106~Tucker%20Anderson~Draft%20No.%204.1,%203-19-2019~3-19-2019.pdf>

[3] <https://legislature.vermont.gov/people/all/2020/Senate>

[4] <mailto:khorn@vlct.org>

[5] <mailto:gzakov@vlct.org>