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## 2022 Weekly Legislative Report #3

**January 14, 2022**

Today's report features articles on temporary Open Meeting Law provisions, this year's town meeting, housing and land use, climate action, and more, plus 41 new bills that, if passed, will affect Vermont municipalities.

New at vlct.org, you can now easily track the session's bills that especially affect municipalities. Two new webpages hold cumulative lists for [bills introduced in the House](#) [1] and [in the Senate](#) [2]. These are in addition to the New Bills tables in our Weekly Legislative Reports. We'll update them each Friday to help you follow bills as they wend their ways through the State House committees.

### To read this report:

- Under "This Week's Articles," simply click on any of the article titles to have the article expand so you can read it.
- To download the full report to print or read offline, click "PDF Version" in the upper right corner of this page.
- As the legislative session progresses, go to our [Legislative Reports page](#) [3] to revisit this preview and find subsequent weekly legislative reports.

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## **Temporary Open Meeting Law Provisions**

This week, the legislature passed S.222, a bill that implements several temporary provisions of the Open Meeting Law. The temporary provisions should be familiar to local officials, as they are replicated from temporary stipulations that were put in place when the pandemic began.

The bill authorizes a meeting of a public body to be held fully remotely without needing to designate a physical meeting location. The language in S.222 is permissive, and if a public body chooses to meet remotely, it must use technology that permits public attendance through electronic or other means and allows public access by telephone. The public body must also post information that enables the public to directly access and participate in the meeting and include it in the meeting's agenda.

Municipal legislative bodies and school boards that meet remotely under these provisions must record their meetings, unless unusual circumstances make it impossible to do so. Minutes of the meeting must be posted not more than 10 calendar days from the date of the meeting. Meeting agendas or notices of a special meeting may be posted in two designated electronic locations in lieu of the physical designated public places in the municipality, or in a combination of a designated electronic location and a designated public place. Notices and agendas must be posted in or near the municipal clerk's office and must be provided to the newspapers of general circulation for the municipality.

The temporary authority expires January 15, 2023. The bill was sent to the governor's desk where it awaits his signature.

## **Town Meeting 2022**

This week, the legislature passed S.172, a bill that was introduced last week. It allows local legislative bodies to vote to use Australian ballot voting for this year's town meeting, even if they ordinarily have floor meetings. These emergency provisions were in place for meetings in 2021 but that authority expired at the end of the year. S.172 makes clear that the authority applies only to town meeting 2022 and to meetings that result from it, such as a petition for a re-vote. A town may *not* use the temporary authority for Australian ballot voting to put an item on a ballot that asks voters to approve moving to Australian ballot for all future meetings.

The bill also allows municipal officials to move town meeting to a safer date later in the year and allows for a pre-town meeting informational meeting to be held by electronic means without designating a physical location. During remote informational meetings, the municipality must use technology that (1) permits the public to attend through electronic or other means, (2) allows the public to access the hearing by telephone whenever feasible, (3) records the meeting (unless impossible to do so), and (4) posts information about how the

public may access the meeting electronically and include that information in the published agenda.

The Town of Brattleboro, which holds the state's only representative town meeting, may also hold that meeting by electronic means, which the town successfully did in 2021.

The governor signed the bill this afternoon.

S.233, another bill that addressing town meeting, has also made its way swiftly through the legislature. The bill provides that no person will be required to collect voter signatures in order to have that person's name placed on the ballot as a candidate for a local election held at a 2022 annual municipal meeting. It also allows the legislative body of a school district to vote that ballots from different towns not be commingled before counting for the 2022 annual district meeting. The ballots, however, *may* be counted by each member town and the results reported to the school district clerk to determine the official district-wide results.

Introduced on Tuesday, S.223 has already passed both chambers and will head to the governor for his signature in the coming days.

## **Housing and Land Use**

The availability and affordability of housing in the state is an issue that is top of mind with every legislator this year as the consequences of land, material and purchase price escalation, labor and material shortages, and land use policy have created a perfect storm. According to a Vermont Housing Finance Agency report, in February 2020 - admittedly, before the pandemic induced a surge in real estate costs and purchases - Vermont had approximately 331,100 homes (most of which were built before 1975) to house a population of 645,570. Of that number, 186,310 were used or intended for owner occupancy, 80,000 were for renters, 53,940 were for seasonal or vacation homes, and nearly 10,000 remained vacant. The report estimated that approximately 8,000 units (3.5 percent of the housing stock) were listed as short-term rentals in 2018. It also stated that by 2025, the state's stock of rental housing will need to increase by 2,629 and 1,743 new homeownership opportunities will be needed to meet expected demand.

Currently, there are all kinds of initiatives, many of them in bill form, to address what is an acute supply problem. Those bills are being taken up in several committees.

The Senate Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs Committee is evaluating S.79, the rental inspection bill that was vetoed by the governor last July, and S.101, which was on the Senate Calendar with a House amendment when the veto session adjourned last June. The committee is discussing a new bill that incorporates a number of provisions from S.79 and S.101 while also addressing the governor's concerns about the investment that would be needed to shift rental housing inspections to the Division of Fire Safety. On Tuesday, VLCT testified before the committee in support of shifting responsibility for housing inspections to the Department of Public Safety; and on Wednesday, the committee hosted a roundtable of housing advocates to discuss approaches to

alleviating the housing crisis. The issue is being taken up again today (Friday).

That new bill, S.210, makes clear that after adopting rules to establish health, safety, sanitation, and fitness for habitation standards for rental housing, the Public Safety commissioner would implement a “complaint driven” system to conduct inspections of rental housing. The bill provides for penalties of up to \$1,000 per violation for not complying with the requirements of an inspection report. It would establish a statewide rental housing registry, maintained by the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, and establish an annual registration fee of \$35 per unit. If a town has a rental housing registry in place, the bill would not require duplicative registrations but rather require that entity to report data to the state when requested. The registry would also not apply to (1) units provided to family or acquaintances, (2) units used for home-share programs, (3) units for those providing personal care to the owner or their household, (4) lodging establishments, (5) up to three accessory units on the property of an owners primary residence, (6) non-winterized seasonal units unavailable for rent during the winter, or (7) housing provided as a benefit of farm employment. The fees would support the hiring of staff to administer the registration and to conduct inspections and regulate housing.

Pursuant to S.210, local health officers would have the authority to assist the Department of Public Safety in inspecting rental housing. If they inspect a rental property without involving the division, they would need to issue an inspection report to the department.

S.210 would establish a rental housing investment program that would incentivize private apartment owners to make significant improvements to their properties such as weatherization by providing grants of up to \$30,000 and forgivable loans, matched in part by the property owner. The bill would also establish a Vermont Homeownership Revolving Loan Fund to provide no-interest loans to Vermonters who might otherwise be unable to afford to make necessary improvements to homes they purchase and focus on Black, Indigenous, or Persons of Color (BIPOC), who are systematically disenfranchised from financing real estate through traditional banking and thus denied the ability to develop lasting wealth.

This week, the Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee took up a comprehensive bill to amend Act 250. S.234 would require a town to secure a “smart growth designation” that would serve to demonstrate that a designated center is sufficiently prepared to be exempted from Act 250. The designation would be approved by the Natural Resources Board (NRB) and would be on top of a designation as a designated downtown development district or neighborhood development area that is approved by the Downtown Development Board. The application would require approximately 12 demonstrations from the town, and a designation by the NRB would be appealable to the Environmental Court. The town would need this designation in order to have the designated downtown or neighborhood development area exempted from Act 250. Municipal Bylaw Modernization Grants, a new category of the Municipal Planning Grant program, would be available to towns to update bylaws prior to securing smart growth designation. If this new process is designed to address the universally recognized crisis in housing availability and accelerate the development of housing, it will fail. The process of acquiring the new designation and refuting all appeals in Environmental Court will likely take years.

The bill would require that towns respond to a request for input on an Act 250 application within 90 days of the request. Failure to meet that deadline would mean that the application is presumed to not have an unreasonable burden on educational, municipal, or governmental services.

The legislation also incorporates language in previous bills that defines connecting habitat, forest blocks, fragmentation, and habitat for purposes of Act 250. It would re-establish a road rule whereby the construction of a road or driveway that exceeds 2,000 feet, or any combination of road and driveway, by a person – not a municipality – would subject the project to Act 250 jurisdiction. Routine maintenance of class 4 roads for stormwater improvements would not be considered upgrades. Finally, the bill would amend Act 250 to limit restrictions on hours of operation for wood manufacturers, clarify the definition of development in one-acre towns, and assess the structure of the Natural Resources Board.

In the House, H.511 was referred to the Natural Resources, Fish, and Wildlife Committee. The bill makes several changes to statute to facilitate housing development, stating in the purpose section that “small scale and infill developers are critical to rural and community revitalization in locations where development is not occurring and is necessary to meet the full range of housing needs.” H.511 would allow development to take place in neighborhood development areas – including in flood hazard and fluvial erosion areas that contain pre-existing development and are suitable for infill development as defined in the [Vermont Flood Hazard Area and River Corridor Rule](#) [6]. If such areas are included, local bylaws must ensure that new infill development will occur outside the flood hazard area and will not contribute to fluvial erosion hazards within the river corridor, and that it will also protect river corridors outside the neighborhood development area.

The bill would repeal the requirement for the neighborhood development area to be served by municipal or community wastewater. Municipal bylaws for neighborhood development areas and new town centers would need to provide for four or more dwelling units per acre for all identified residential uses (without counting accessory dwelling units) or at least an equal density to the surrounding neighborhood. The definitions of priority housing project and mixed income housing in Act 250 would be amended to be more permissive of housing development. No Act 250 permit would be required for a priority housing project in a designated center.

H. 511 would also appropriate \$150,000 to hire an independent consultant to evaluate designation programs and conduct statewide outreach to inform that evaluation.

And still more bills!

- H.549 is another bill that would amend the definition of priority housing project and would also exempt from sales tax building supplies used in construction of priority housing projects.
- H524 would prohibit bylaws that (1) disallow the development of multi-unit or multi-family dwellings; (2) require minimum lot sizes of more than five acres for construction of one dwelling unit; (3) require setbacks greater than “a distance needed to address pedestrian and vehicle traffic safety”; or (4) establish off-street parking or loading requirements for residential uses. Nor would site plan review be allowed for any number of dwellings.
- H.347 would provide that no municipal zoning bylaw could have the effect of excluding tiny houses (not more than 400 square feet of floor area, excluding lofts) or tiny house parks, and codes or regulations applying to single family dwellings would also apply to tiny houses. It would provide that statutes applying to mobile homes and mobile home parks would also apply to tiny houses and tiny house parks.

These bills are only those that address the funding, construction, and inspection of housing, and land use laws related to housing. Additional housing bills are currently in other committees. Clearly the legislature will have much to consider this session as they decide whether to make it easier or more difficult to develop the housing that almost every Vermont community needs.

Resources for this article:

- [The State of Housing in Vermont](#) <sup>[7]</sup> (Agency of Commerce and Community Development)
- [Housing Needs Assessment, Housing Stock](#) <sup>[8]</sup>, February 2020
- [Vermont Housing Needs Assessment: 2020-2024](#) <sup>[9]</sup>, February 2020

## **Climate Action**

At least 13 climate change-related bills have been introduced in the first two weeks of the 2022 session. However, that number belies the amount of attention that will be paid to the issue this session as numerous committees – Energy and Technology, Natural Resources and Energy, Agriculture and Forestry, and Transportation in the House and Natural Resources and Energy in the Senate, to name a few – have already heard testimony from the Vermont Climate Council regarding the draft Vermont Climate Action Plan, which the council released last month.

This week, Secretary of Natural Resources Julie Moore and Global Warming Solutions Act Project Director Jane Lazorchak made the rounds of committees, accompanied by several council members. They detailed the nature of climate change in Vermont, which readers are generally familiar with by now. They summarized the goals of the draft Vermont Climate Action Plan which include cutting climate pollution by 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030; prioritizing assistance to those most affected; encouraging smart growth and related strategies; achieving long-term carbon sequestration and storage; achieving net zero emissions by 2050 across all energy sectors; reducing energy burdens for rural and marginalized communities; limiting the use of chemicals or products that contribute to climate change; and encouraging climate adaptation and resilience in communities and natural systems.

Next week, the House Energy and Technology Committee will take up H.518, a bill that would establish a Municipal Fuel Switching Program that would offer grants for renewable and efficient heating systems in municipal buildings owned by cities, towns, fire districts, incorporated villages, and all other governmental incorporated units. The objective is to take concrete steps to switch fuel sources for municipal buildings to reduce greenhouse gases, stabilize costs in the face of volatile fossil fuel prices, and increase resilience at the municipal level.

The bill would provide for Efficiency Vermont and the Department of Buildings and General Services, through the existing State Energy Management Program, to coordinate with regional planning commissions to solicit and develop plans for each municipality. Grants of up to \$50,000 would be made to each municipality to conduct thermal energy audits to determine the most cost-effective renewable energy system replacement or primary heating source. Grants of up to \$200,000 would be

available to implement approved projects. Up to \$4,000 would be provided to each municipality to facilitate community meetings and communication about resilience and switching from fossil fuel sources. As the bill was introduced, the program would be funded by \$48 million from the General Fund.

VLCT estimates that the number of buildings is in excess of 2,000, including town offices, town halls, libraries, salt sheds, fire and police stations, recreation centers, and municipal garages. Not all of them require improvements to shift fuel sources from fossil fuels – in fact not all of them even have fuel sources – but many were constructed in the twentieth century or earlier and would greatly benefit from weatherization improvements and renewable fuel sources. Because the cost to make such improvements is prohibitive for many municipalities, local officials welcome the possibility that there will finally be some real assistance to make those shifts and thus implement portions of the Vermont Climate Action Plan.

<b>Bills Introduced in 2022 (so far) that Address the Climate and Energy Use</b>					
<a href="#">H.518</a> [10]	<a href="#">H.526</a> [11]	<a href="#">H.550</a> [12]	<a href="#">H.552</a> [13]	<a href="#">H.557</a> [14]	<a href="#">H.594</a> [15]
<a href="#">H.600</a> [16]	<a href="#">H.646</a> [17]	<a href="#">S.225</a> [18]	<a href="#">S.232</a> [19]	<a href="#">S.233</a> [20]	<a href="#">S.258</a> [21]

**Resource for this article:**

- [The Global Warming Solutions Act and the Vermont Climate Action Plan](#) [22] (Jan. 11, 2022)

**[Revenue Projections](#)**

On Thursday, at the call of Governor Scott, state economists Tom Kavet and Jeff Carr detailed their consensus revenue forecast update to the Emergency Board. The Emergency Board is made up of the governor and the chairs of the House and Senate appropriations and revenue committees. As the state economists have warned since the pandemic began amid wildly different assessments of what economic devastation the state would endure, the forecasts remain uncertain. Even as Vermont and the nation continue the struggle to control the pandemic, predict its course, and reduce its impact on people and the economy, near-term revenues in Vermont look quite healthy. FY22 revenues benefitted greatly from a portion of the more than \$10 billion in federal spending injected into the Vermont economy. Federal money, paired with increases in revenues from income and consumption taxes, helped put revenues above prior July 2021 expectations.

The infusion of federal money and a global pandemic shifting people’s day-to-day lifestyles helped to boost Vermont’s tax revenues in a variety of ways. Personal income tax revenues are significantly higher, as are personal income estimated tax payments tied to higher levels of business income for taxpayers who pay those businesses. Tax revenues also increased due to income through personal income tax payments and personal income tax payments tied to increased capital gains. Assistance from the federal government also helped increase corporate income tax receipts. This assistance has apparently flowed to the bottom-line, increasing profitability and boosting corporate income. Low-interest rates and out-of-state purchases of real estate helped increase property transfer tax

revenues, and equity market gains in taxable investments increased capital gains revenues. Still, the economists cautioned that state revenues may run into significant headwinds in the future and revenues will likely not be sustained beyond 2023.

Compared to a revenue forecast from last July, General Fund revenues are now predicted to increase by \$44 million for FY22 and \$26.5 million in FY23, and decrease by \$0.1 million in FY24. That's according to a January 2022 Consensus Revenue Forecast that Kavet and Carr provided to the board. These projections include anticipated revenues from a future cannabis marketplace in Vermont. If cannabis sales are not factored in FY23, revenues increase by only \$18.5 million and decrease by \$17.4 million in FY24.

Transportation Fund and Transportation Infrastructure Bond (TIB) Fund revenue forecasts do not look quite as rosy. The forecast for the Transportation Fund is downgraded \$2.3 million for FY22, \$1.9 million for FY23, and \$1.6 million for FY24. TIB revenues are expected to decrease by a total of \$0.1 million in fiscal years 2022 through 2026.

Education Fund revenues are expected to increase \$6.2 million in FY22, \$8.8 million in FY23, \$5.9 million in FY24, and \$1.6 million in FY25, and decrease \$1.6 million in FY26.

Interesting things begin to happen, however, in 2024 and beyond. Kavet and Carr believe that at some point, the positive effects of the federal deficit spending effect will run their course and the U.S. and Vermont economies will begin to transition back to where progress will be driven by underlying fundamentals. For FY25 and FY26, adjusted for estimated cannabis revenues beginning in FY23, General Fund revenues are expected to decline by \$27 million in FY25 and by another \$31 million in FY26.

The takeaway from this forecast is simply that because of the pandemic, the unprecedented deficit spending by the federal government, rampant inflation, the widespread disruptions to labor markets and global supply chains, and a host of other realities, it is nearly impossible to predict the economic forecast in future years, let alone to plot a road map to work from. Economists know that even with the huge infusion of money into our nation's economy, the bubble we are currently in will, in just a few years, settle down - at which point we will need to make the tricky transition back to a place where forward economic progress will be driven by the economy's underlying fundamentals.

#### **Resources for this article:**

- [Consensus Revenue Forecast](#) <sup>[23]</sup> (Jan. 13, 2022)
- [Consensus Revenue Forecast](#) <sup>[24]</sup> (virtual version)

### **[Rural Caucus Moves Ahead on Legislation](#)**

This week, the Rural Economic Development Working Group (REDWnG, or the Rural Caucus) had its Rural Economic Development Omnibus Bill introduced. [H.581](#) <sup>[25]</sup> would support those who work the land and seek to build resilience in the face of climate change. The caucus also developed a website



to provide updates to members and the public. The 39-page bill would establish a Forest Future Program and make a number of changes to Act 250 to facilitate housing construction, develop on-farm businesses, increase allowable weights for large trucks, and redefine the circumstances under which an Act 250 permit could address hours of operation for forest-based enterprises such as logging, sawmills, pellet mills, woodchips, mulch and firewood. Much of the language in the bill will be helpful to local governments; other parts, however, raise alarm bells.

The Vermont Forest Future Program would be designed to increase sustainable forest management practices and prepare a workforce to support the forest economy in the future. The Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund Program and Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation would be charged with developing the strategic Vermont Forest Future Action Plan to implement the program. The list of stakeholders with which the commissioner and program are to consult does not include municipalities as the bill was introduced, although many subjects the plan would address are central to local governance and quality of life in rural areas. By July 1, 2023, the Sustainable Jobs Fund Program would need to submit recommendations for the forest action plan to the legislature.

No Act 250 permit would be required for sawmills that produce 3.5 million board feet annually, or operations involving primary processing of forest products and annually produce 3,500 cords or less of firewood or cordwood, or 10,000 tons or less of bole wood, whole tree chips, or wood pellets. Act 250 jurisdiction would be amended for recreation trails accepted into the Vermont Trails System so that it extends only to the recreational trail and infrastructure necessary for its operation, not to the rest of any parcel where a trail is located. The trail amendment in particular, which has been debated many times in recent years, is long overdue.

Act 250 permits would be issued for a specified time period determined by the Natural Resources Board. When they expire, they would no longer be subject to Act 250 unless new improvements were constructed.

Municipalities without designated centers could apply to the Act 250 District Commission for a master plan permit for any portion of the municipality, without having ownership control over the affected property. An accessory on-farm business development that complies with Required Agricultural Practices would not be subject to Act 250 if the improvements were on one acre or less, and no municipal plan or bylaw or regional plan could prohibit an accessory on-farm business at the same location as a farm. Also exempt from Act 250 would be affordable housing development of less than ten units on a tract of land owned or controlled by a person and located within a designated downtown, village center, or neighborhood development area. This last proposal has also been debated and appeared in many bills for years.

A special annual permit would allow tractor trailer or truck combinations transporting cargo that can be separated into units of legal weight without affecting the physical integrity of the load to weigh 107,000 pounds on six axles or 117,000 pounds on seven axles. There must be at least 51 feet between the first and last axle. State fees would be established of \$465 for six axles and \$610 for seven axles. The current maximum weight of truck combinations with six or more load-bearing axles is 99,000 pounds. As is the case in much of the country, Vermont towns have ongoing concerns about the damage that longer and heavier trucks would inflict on compactly settled downtown and village centers, as well as local roadways. The Department of Motor Vehicles would be required to establish an online permitting system for trucks by next January.

The Municipal Fuel Switching Program that is the subject of H.518 (see Climate Action article) is also in H.581.

Pieces of this bill will likely go to different committees and we will alert you to any updates.

### Resources for this article:

- [Rural Economic Development Working Group website](#) [26]
- [H.581 as introduced](#) [27]

## Governor's Budget Address

Governor Phil Scott will deliver his budget address to the legislature at 1:00 pm on Tuesday, January 18. You may watch the proceedings on Zoom. Check the [Vermont General Assembly](#) [28] website for details.

## New Bills of Minicipal Interest

<b>Bill Number</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Current Location</b>
<a href="#">H.538</a> [29]	Would enable a nonprofit college or university to establish, own, and operate a cemetery.	House Gen., Housing, and Military Affairs
<a href="#">H.549</a> [30]	Would expand the definition of priority housing project and exempt building supplies and materials used to construct priority housing projects from the sales and use tax.	House Nat. Resources, Fish, and Wildlife
<a href="#">H.550</a> [12]	Would limit the energy efficiency charge for net metering customers to the net consumption of electricity.	House Energy and Technology
<a href="#">H.556</a> [31]	Would exempt from the education property tax and the municipal property tax all property owned by Native American tribes that have been recognized pursuant to 1 V.S.A. chapter 23 or owned by the nonprofit organizations that are organized for the benefit of those tribes. To be eligible for the exemption, the property must be used for purposes of the tribe and may not be leased or rented for profit.	House Ways and Means
<a href="#">H.558</a> [32]	Would amend the Vermont personal income tax exemption for Social Security benefits by increasing the income thresholds by \$10,000.	House Ways and Means
<a href="#">H.559</a> [33]	Would set the annual rate of contribution for the Workers' Compensation Administrative Fund.	House Commerce and Econ. Development

<a href="#">H.566</a> [34]	Would require the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund Program, in collaboration with the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, to establish the Vermont Forest Future Program to strengthen, promote, and protect the forest products industry in Vermont. To implement the program, the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund Program would be required to develop the Vermont Forest Future Action Plan.	House Agriculture and Forestry
<a href="#">H.568</a> [35]	Would require the Department of Health to develop and implement a plan to disseminate masks and at-home rapid antigen tests recommended by the CDC or other qualified public health institution throughout the state directly to consumers free of charge. Masks would be either N95, KN95 or their equivalent.	House Human Services
<a href="#">H.569</a> [36]	Would encourage new workers to relocate to Vermont, to provide flexibility for Economic Recovery grants, increase the capacity for the Capital Investment Program, enable project-based tax increment financing districts, and promote sustainable development and affordable housing.	House Commerce and Econ. Development
<a href="#">H.573</a> [37]	Would prohibit discrimination in employment and public accommodations on the basis of an individual's immunization status.	House Gen., Housing, and Military Affairs
<a href="#">H.581</a> [25]	Would make multiple changes to support economic development in the rural areas of the state, including reducing the requirement to mitigate the reduction of primary agricultural soils for forest-based enterprises and community wastewater systems that will serve a housing development within a designated center; creating an Act 250 master plan permit for municipalities without a designated center; clarifying the definition of an "accessory on-farm business" and how one is regulated; amending the Act 250 jurisdictional trigger for affordable housing in designated centers; and increasing the allowable weight for large trucks.	House Nat. Resources, Fish, and Wildlife
<a href="#">H.583</a> [38]	Would create a right of appeal for a municipal board of listers or an appointed assessor to the Director of Property Valuation and Review at the Department of Taxes or the Superior Court from a decision of the board of civil authority that is approved by the governing body of that municipality regarding a property valuation appeal.	House Ways and Means
<a href="#">H.585</a> [39]	Would require the Legislative Apportionment Board to conduct a study and make recommendations on Vermont's reapportionment process.	House Government Operations
<a href="#">H.589</a> [40]	Would propose an initial district plan to cities, towns, and boards of civil authority as a starting point to receive testimony and feedback on the reapportionment of the House of Representatives.	House Government Operations
<a href="#">H.592</a> [41]	Would authorize municipalities to adopt an ordinance extending State and local enforcement authority concerning scrapyards to any premises within the municipality that constitutes a public nuisance due to the accumulation of rubbish, scrap, junk, or abandoned vehicles.	House Government Operations
<a href="#">H.594</a> [15]	Would change the name of the Department of Public Safety, Division of Fire Safety, to the Division of Fire and Building Safety and give it jurisdiction over implementing Vermont's energy codes, the Residential Building Energy Standards, and the Commercial Building Energy Standards.	House Energy and Technology
<a href="#">H.605</a> [42]	Would require the Clean Water Board to recommend for annual appropriation at least \$200,000 annually to fund ECO AmeriCorps members who are assigned to clean water programs in the state.	House Nat. Resources, Fish, and Wildlife
<a href="#">H.606</a> [43]	Would establish State goals of conserving 30% of the land of the state by 2030 and 50% by 2050.	House Nat. Resources, Fish, and Wildlife

<a href="#">H.617</a> [44]	Would permit employers to provide employees with an electronic or physical copy of the notice of employment laws in lieu of posting that notice in the workplace.	House Commerce and Econ. Development
<a href="#">H.625</a> [45]	Would provide temporary protections to tenants and homeowners against no-cause evictions, foreclosure actions, and tax sales.	House Gen., Housing, and Military Affairs
<a href="#">H.633</a> [46]	Would require a person certified in erosion control measures to be present at the site of an activity that disturbs soil within a protected lake shoreland area or a protected perennial stream area.	House Nat. Resources, Fish, and Wildlife
<a href="#">H.644</a> [47]	Would change the penalties for possession of a personal use supply of drugs from a misdemeanor or low-level felony to a civil offense subject to a \$500 penalty. Would establish the Drug Use Standards Advisory Board for the purpose of determining the benchmark personal use dosage and the benchmark personal use supply for regulated drugs with a goal of preventing and reducing the criminalization of personal drug use.	House Judiciary
<a href="#">H.646</a> [17]	Would direct the governor to join the Transportation and Climate Initiative of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic States' cap-and-invest program, and direct State agencies to adopt rules to administer the cap-and-invest program and how the program's revenues can be spent.	House Transportation
<a href="#">H.647</a> [48]	Would create a special fund to administer funds from a cap-and-invest program and also create the Equity Advisory Body to allocate the program's revenues to greenhouse gas reduction projects.	House Transportation
<a href="#">H.649</a> [49]	Would make the annual motor vehicle safety and emissions inspections biennial and form a study committee to investigate the effect motor vehicle inspections have on Vermonters with low income, who live in rural parts of the state, and who are elder.	House Transportation
<a href="#">H.650</a> [50]	Would prohibit the intentional use of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances in products to be sold in Vermont. Would also prohibit the use and import of wastes that contain microplastics.	House Nat. Resources, Fish, and Wildlife
<a href="#">S.223</a> [51]	Would temporarily suspend the signature requirement for candidates to place their name on the ballot for the 2022 annual municipal meeting; and authorize the legislative body of a school district to vote to not commingle the ballots of member municipalities for the 2022 annual district meeting.	Senate Government Operations
<a href="#">S.226</a> [52]	Would increase the supply of affordable housing in Vermont, promote homeownership, and broaden housing opportunities for Vermonters.	Senate Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs
<a href="#">S.228</a> [53]	Would prohibit the use of no-knock warrants by law enforcement officers absent a threat of serious bodily harm and to require a law enforcement officer to provide notice of the officer's identity and purpose to the occupant of a premises before the officer enters the premises to execute the warrant.	Senate Judiciary
<a href="#">S.229</a> [54]	Would require the use of ranked-choice voting for the primary and general elections for U.S. Senator and U.S. Representative, and general elections for president and vice president. Would also require the use of ranked-choice voting for the presidential primary election for each major political party.	Senate Government Operations
<a href="#">S.230</a> [55]	Would provide an enhanced penalty for the criminal threatening of election officials, public employees, and public servants.	Senate Judiciary

<a href="#">S.234</a> [56]	Would make multiple amendments to the State land use and development law, Act 250, including creating designated smart growth areas that will be exempt from Act 250 and providing grants to municipalities to help them achieve this new designation; requiring municipalities to respond to Act 250 requests within 90 days; adding new criteria for forest blocks and connecting habitat; adding a jurisdictional trigger for roads; clarifying Act 250 jurisdiction in one-acre towns; and creating a committee to study the governance and administration of the Act 250 program.	Senate Natural Resources and Energy
<a href="#">S.235</a> [57]	Would study the issue of how Act 250 jurisdiction should apply to agricultural businesses.	Senate Natural Resources and Energy
<a href="#">S.237</a> [58]	Would regulate surface water withdrawals and interbasin transfers of surface water occurring in the state.	Senate Natural Resources and Energy
<a href="#">S.246</a> [59]	Would permit an injured worker to request pre-authorization of benefits in addition to medical treatment, and specify when an employer may require an employee who has been medically cleared to return to work to engage in a work search.	Senate Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs
<a href="#">S.247</a> [60]	Would prohibit discrimination based on an individual's genetic information in relation to insurance coverage and the provision of social and medical services.	Senate Finance
<a href="#">S.250</a> [61]	Would provide for greater accountability for law enforcement officers, including the creation of a private right of action against law enforcement officers that prohibits common law and statutory immunities as a defense. Would also provide specific parameters concerning independent investigations of police misconduct, anti-bias training for law enforcement officers, and the creation of a law enforcement officer database with related disclosures during criminal prosecutions.	Senate Judiciary
<a href="#">S.254</a> [62]	Would create a private right of action against law enforcement officers for violations of Vermont constitutional, statutory, and common law rights. Would waive the use of qualified immunity as a defense in such actions and provides for qualified indemnification of law enforcement officers by law enforcement agencies.	Senate Judiciary
<a href="#">S.258</a> [21]	Would require the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets to evaluate the sufficiency of the Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs) to determine if their requirements and practices adequately address increased and foreseeable climate change-induced precipitation in a manner that protects soil resources and prevents harmful or inefficient runoff of nutrient pollution to state waters.	Senate Agriculture
<a href="#">S.261</a> [63]	Would allow municipalities to retain 0.225 of 1% of the property tax collected when making timely education property tax payments to school districts. This retention would compensate municipalities that make timely payments of education property tax to school districts the same way that municipalities that make timely payments of education property tax directly to the State may retain 0.225 of 1% of the property tax collected. In the same way that municipalities that make education property tax payments directly to the State are subject to an 8% interest rate on late payments, the bill would subject municipalities that make education property tax payments to school districts to a late payment interest rate of 8% of the amount due.	Senate Finance
<a href="#">S.263</a> [64]	Would encourage new workers to relocate to Vermont, provide flexibility for Economic Recovery grants, increase the capacity for the Capital Investment Program, enable project-based tax increment financing districts, and promote sustainable development and affordable housing.	Senate Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs

## Related Content

[The State of Housing in Vermont \(Agency of Commerce and Community Development\)](#) [65]  
[Housing Needs Assessment, Housing Stock, February 2020](#) [66]  
[Vermont Housing Needs Assessment: 2020-2024, February 2020](#) [67]  
[Consensus Revenue Forecast \(Jan. 13, 2022\)](#) [68]  
[Consensus Revenue Forecast \(Virtual Version\)](#) [69]  
[The Global Warming Solutions Act and the Vermont Climate Action Plan \(Jan. 11, 2022\)](#) [70]  
[Rural Economic Development Working Group website](#) [71]  
[H.581 as introduced](#) [72]

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## Links

[1] <https://www.vlct.org/node/16961>  
[2] <http://www.vlct.org/node/16960>  
[3] <http://www.vlct.org/wlr>  
[4] <mailto:advocacy@vlct.org>  
[5] <http://legislature.vermont.gov>  
[6] <https://dec.vermont.gov/content/vermont-flood-hazard-area-and-river-corridor-rule>  
[7] <https://ljfo.vermont.gov/assets/Publications/All-Legislative-Briefing-December-8-2021/7827cf974b/Hanford-TheStateOfHousingInVermont.pdf>  
[8] <https://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accdnew/files/documents/Housing/Fact%20sheet%203%20Housing%20stock.pdf>  
[9] <https://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accdnew/files/documents/Housing/VT%20HNA%202020%20Report.pdf>  
[10] <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2022/H.518>  
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[12] <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2022/H.550>  
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[22] <https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/WorkGroups/House%20Natural/Climate%20Action%20Plan/W~Julie%20Moore~The%20Global%20Warming%20Solutions%20Act%20and%20the%20Vermont%20Climate%20Action%20Plan%20Presentation~1-11-2022.pdf>  
[23] [https://aoa.vermont.gov/sites/aoa/files/revenue-economy/EboardRpts/EPR\\_ForecastUpdateReport\\_01.13.2022\\_FINAL.pdf](https://aoa.vermont.gov/sites/aoa/files/revenue-economy/EboardRpts/EPR_ForecastUpdateReport_01.13.2022_FINAL.pdf)  
[24] <https://ljfo.vermont.gov/assets/Uploads/fe4763c6c0/Kavet-Economic-Review-and-Revenue-Forecast-Update-0122.pdf>  
[25] <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2022/H.581>  
[26] <https://sites.google.com/vtrural.org/redwng/about>  
[27] <https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/Docs/BILLS/H-0581/H-0581%20As%20Introduced.pdf>  
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[70] <http://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/WorkGroups/House Natural/Climate Action Plan/W~Julie Moore~The Global Warming Solutions Act and the Vermont Climate Action Plan Presentation~1-11-2022.pdf>  
[71] <http://sites.google.com/vtrural.org/redwng/about>  
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