

VBA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE - WEEK 1 JANUARY 11, 2025

2025 VERMONT LEGISLATURE CONVENES

The 2025-2026 Vermont Legislative Session kicked off on Wednesday, January 8, 2025. There were leadership challenges expected in both the House and Senate, but in the end Senate President Pro Tempore [Phil Baruth](#) (D-Chittenden Central) faced no opposition and was unanimously reelected to the role. On the House side, Representative [Laura Sibilis](#) (I-Dover) challenged incumbent Speaker [Jill Krowinski](#) (D-Burlington) but came up short. Speaker Krowinski handily won reelection, with significant bipartisan support, by a vote of 111-35.

In addition to electing new leadership, both the Senate and the House made new committee assignments this week. On the Senate side, of the 11 standing Senate committees, 9 will have new leadership this session. Senator [Andrew Perchlik](#) (D-Washington) will be the new Chair of Senate Appropriations Committee Chair and Senator [Ann Cummings](#) (D-Washington) will continue to chair Senate Finance. Senator [Alison Clarkson](#) (D-Windsor) will take over as Chair of the Senate Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs Committee, which is the committee that also handles all liquor and DLL matters. Senator Clarkson has generally been favorable to Vermont brewers in the past.

On the House side, six of the 14 standing committees will have new leaders. Representative [Robin Scheu](#) (D-Middlebury) will take-over as Chair of House Appropriations. Representative Matt Birong will be the new Chair of [House Government Operations and Military Affairs](#), which is the committee that handles all liquor and DLL matters in the House. [Rep. Birong](#), previously a restaurant owner in Vergennes, still operates a catering/food truck and is well-versed in issues of interest to Vermont's craft beer industry.

GOVERNOR SCOTT SWORN IN FOR A FIFTH TERM

On Thursday, Governor Phil Scott (R) was sworn in for his fifth term and gave his inaugural address. The Governor's speech highlighted major challenges facing the state, especially as the population ages and there are fewer workers and students. He asked legislators to prioritize three key issues in order to make gains on all Vermont's challenges: affordability, housing, and education.

On housing, he outlined his Administration's strategy to make it easier to build homes and revitalize those in disrepair. This included strengthening and expanding infrastructure, revitalizing neglected communities, bringing in smaller-scale community investment partners and homebuilders, and smart regulatory reform.

The Governor also highlighted Vermont's education quality and affordability crisis and outlined the framework for his Administration's education reform plan. The new proposal will include a new "student-centered funding formula" to provide more and better opportunities for kids and get costs under control. He will also propose a new, simpler governance structure to deliver "a better and more equal education across communities." Finally, his proposal will provide school boards and

administrators with “support and guardrails to reduce cost pressures.” The full transcript of the Governor’s address is [here](#).

HEADLINES OF NOTE

- [Capitol Recap: Phil Scott teases a big education overhaul proposal](#)
- [Gov. Scott comes out swinging on education funding during inaugural address](#)
- [Republicans to assume greater committee leadership in the Vermont House this year](#)

VBA BILL REPORT

Bills are just beginning to be introduced. We expect many more bills of interest will be coming in the weeks ahead.

VBA 2025 Bill Report As of 1/11/25			
Bill	Sponsors	Description	Status
H 24	Rep. Anne Donahue	<p>An Act Relating To Requiring Retail Businesses To Accept Cash</p> <p>This bill proposes to prohibit a retail business from refusing to accept cash payment.</p>	<p>Committees: House Commerce and Economic Development</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development (01/09/25)</p>

VBA Legislative Update – Week 2 January 18, 2025

Governor Scott has announced that his administration will be proposing sweeping omnibus bills addressing education, housing, and affordability. The governor is expected to provide details of these proposals during his budget address on Tuesday, January 28, setting the stage for extended debates in committees throughout the Statehouse about Vermont's core priorities and values. House and Senate committees spent last week getting oriented and laying the foundation for deeper conversations on these and other issues.

One X-factor that could derail lawmakers' orderly approach to tackling these and other major policy challenges is the potential chaos in state funding and policy that could result from potential actions by the incoming Trump Administration.

Last week, Treasurer Mike Pieciak announced the creation of the "Treasurer's Task Force on the Federal Transition." The Task Force includes policy experts, business and community leaders, and will assess the economic impact of anticipated federal policy changes under the incoming Trump administration. Its goal is to provide recommendations to prepare Vermont for potential disruptions in areas such as affordable healthcare, FEMA flood recovery support, housing production, climate resilience, and tariffs. The Task Force convened its first meeting on January 15 and will meet monthly for up to six months to share information and collect public input. We will keep you updated on the work of this Task Force over the coming months. You can find more details [here](#).

Headlines of Note

[Vermont Conversation: What comes next after losing the most Democratic seats in the U.S.? Sen. Phil Baruth & Rep. Jill Krowinski on compromise & change.](#)

[Clean heat standard is less expensive than previously thought, though not 'well suited to Vermont,' commission says](#)

[Vermont's civic health index shows high community engagement but room to grow](#)

[Vermont moves ahead with new federal health care payment model](#)

[The head of Vermont's largest insurance company says health care spending is out of control](#)

VBA Bill Report – Week 2

On Friday, Rep. Birong introduced a bill that makes two changes to alcohol laws of interest to the VBA. The bill, [H.51](#), would:

1. Authorize the holder of a fourth-class license to sell its products to not more than eight additional manufacturers or rectifiers. Current law allows the sale of products of not more than 5 additional manufacturers.

2. Authorize manufacturers of malt beverages to acquire a retail shipping license and ship up to 5,000 gallons of malt beverages to first- and second-class licensees. This change adds “manufacturers of malt beverages” to the law currently limited to vinous beverage manufactures.

No hearings are currently scheduled for this or other bills of interest.

Bill	Sponsors	Description	Status
<u>H 24</u>	Rep. Anne Donahue	<p>An Act Relating To Requiring Retail Businesses To Accept Cash</p> <p>This bill proposes to prohibit a retail business from refusing to accept cash payment.</p>	<p>Committees: House Commerce and Economic Development</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development (01/09/25)</p>
<u>H 45</u>	Rep. Mary-Katherine Stone; Rep. Tiffany Bluemle; Rep. Abbey Duke; Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Bram Kleppner; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Robert Hooper; Rep. Troy Headrick	<p>An Act Relating To Prohibiting Possession Of Firearms On Premises Where Alcohol Is Licensed To Be Served</p> <p>This bill proposes to prohibit possession of firearms on premises where alcohol is licensed to be served and to require that notice of the prohibition be posted at each premises.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/17/25)</p>
<u>H 51</u>	Rep. Lucy Boyden; Rep. Matthew Birong	<p>An Act Relating To Miscellaneous Amendments To The Statutes Governing Alcoholic Beverages</p> <p>This bill proposes to: (1) authorize the holder of a fourth-class license to sell its products to not more than eight additional manufacturers or rectifiers; and (2) authorize manufacturers of malt beverages to acquire a retail shipping license and ship malt beverages to first- and second-class licensees.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/17/25)</p>

VBA Legislative Update – Week 3 January 25, 2025

Economists Update Revenue Forecast

Last week, state economists [released their latest revenue forecast](#) and update on the state of the Vermont economy. According to the economists, the Vermont economy is currently performing exceptionally well, exceeding expectations in several areas:

- **Low Unemployment:** Vermont's unemployment rate remains the second-lowest in the nation at 2.4%, with Chittenden County posting the lowest rate at 1.8%.
- **Strong Job Growth:** Vermont has experienced year-over-year nonfarm payroll job growth exceeding the U.S. in 7 of the past 8 months.
- **Construction Boom:** New construction starts in Vermont are up 2% overall, with residential building starts showing particular strength.
- **Revenue Growth:** The state's revenues have been performing well, with some categories exceeding projected targets.

However, potential challenges and uncertainties lie ahead:

- **Federal Policy Impacts:** Incoming economic policies from the new administration, including tariffs and potential impacts on interest rates, could affect future economic growth.
- **Revenue Volatility:** Certain revenue sources, such as those tied to the stock market, are experiencing strong growth but also introduce volatility.
- **E-Cigarette Revenue Decline:** E-cigarette revenue has declined for the first time, impacting overall Cigarette and Tobacco Products revenue.

Specific recommendations include:

- **Closely Monitoring Federal Policies:** The effects of the new administration's economic policies on inflation and interest rates should be monitored.
- **Address Inequality:** Consider policies that address the growing wealth and income inequality to ensure a more inclusive and sustainable economic model.
- **Invest Wisely:** Utilize the remaining federal funds strategically to maximize their impact on Vermont's long-term economic health.
- **Plan for the Future:** Address the state's demographic challenges through initiatives that attract and retain residents, particularly in younger age cohorts.

Vermont can continue its path of economic growth and prosperity by remaining adaptable and responsive to emerging challenges.

Governor Unveils Framework of School Reform Proposal

Last week, the Secretary of Education and the Commissioner of Taxes presented the framework of the Governor’s education funding and governance reform proposal. More details will be released next week when the Governor delivers his annual budget address to a joint session of the legislature.

The plan proposes to transition Vermont to a more straightforward school funding mechanism, known as a foundation formula, at the start of the 2026-27 school year. The state would calculate a base amount needed to fund a student’s education. Additional funds would be allocated for students who cost more to educate, including those living in poverty and English learners. The administration is still figuring out what that base amount would be and will released the figures in the coming weeks.

Under the foundation formula, there would be a single statewide property tax rate with a discount for income-eligible homeowners. School districts could choose to raise additional funds above what is allocated through the foundation formula. But that amount would be capped to avoid large discrepancies in per-pupil spending between districts,

The second part of the plan calls for consolidating Vermont’s 52 supervisory unions and 119 school districts into five regional school districts, starting in the 2027-28 school year. Each district would have one school board.

VPR reporters [put together this easy summary](#) of the highlights of the plan:

School district structure

Current: 119 school districts

Proposed: Five regional school districts

Spending decisions

Current: Local voters decide what to spend and receive that amount from the state education fund. The state must come up with the money through statewide taxes

Proposed: The state decides what’s appropriate to spend per student; local voters can raise more money locally

Tax rates

Current: Homestead and non-homestead tax rates; homestead tax rate varies in each community based on local per-pupil spending

Proposed: Single statewide education property tax rate

Education standards

Current: The independent State Board of Education handles rulemaking

Proposed: The Agency of Education, within the governor’s administration, handles rulemaking — including standards for “small school eligibility” and minimum and maximum school sizes and class sizes

School closures/consolidation

Current: Local voters or school boards (or both together, depending on the district) decide whether to close a school

Proposed: Schools are assessed “based on financial viability and educational quality.” Failing schools will be “offered options” including sharing resources or merging with other schools

District size

Current: Approximately 180 to 4,100 students

Proposed: Approximately 11,000 to 34,000 students in each regional district

Local governance

Current: School board for each district

Proposed: Five professional (paid) school boards (one for each regional district), plus local School Advisory Councils

School calendar

Current: Local entities set the calendar

Proposed: Single statewide calendar

Curriculum

Current: Each supervisory union sets their own curriculum, aligned with standards from the State Board of Education

Proposed: Statewide standards for a coordinated curriculum

Graduation requirements

Current: Each school district sets its graduation requirements, with state guidance

Proposed: Statewide graduation requirements

Income sensitivity for property taxpayers

Current: Homestead property tax credit based on income

Proposed: Income-eligible homesteads can exempt a portion of their home value from the statewide education property tax

Headlines of Note

[Final Reading: Many repairs to flood-damaged state office buildings are still on hold](#)

[Scott administration unveils education plan with just 5 school districts statewide](#)

[Vermont to get \\$22 million in new Purdue Pharma opioid settlement, if approved by court](#)

[In John Rodgers' Upset Win, Some See a Bright Political Future](#)

[Health Care Bill Would Slash Pay of Hospital Execs](#)

[Feds OK use of Medicaid funds to cover rent for unhoused people](#)

VBA Bill Report

As we reported last week, Reps. Birong and Boyden recently introduced a bill that makes two changes to alcohol laws of interest to the VBA. The bill, [H.51](#), would:

1. Authorize the holder of a fourth-class license to sell the products of not more than eight additional manufacturers or rectifiers. Current law allows the sale of products of not more than 5 additional manufacturers.
2. Authorize a manufacturer malt beverages and operates a brewery in the United States to apply for a retail shipping license to sell up to 5,000 gallons of malt beverages per year directly to first- or second-class licensees and deliver the beverages by common carrier, the manufacturer's own vehicle, or the vehicle of an employee of a manufacturer, provided that the beverages are sold on invoice, and no more than 100 gallons per month are sold to any single first- or second-class licensee.

Next Friday, VBA Government Affairs Committee (GAC) will be consider whether to recommend to the Board that the VBA take a position on this bill. Please forward any comments or concerns to Emma Arian or Matt Wilson.

No hearings are currently scheduled for this or other bills of interest.

Bill	Sponsors	Description	Status
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H 45	Rep. Mary-Katherine Stone; Rep. Tiffany Bluemle; Rep. Abbey Duke; Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Bram Kleppner; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Robert Hooper; Rep. Troy Headrick	An Act Relating To Prohibiting Possession Of Firearms On Premises Where Alcohol Is Licensed To Be Served This bill proposes to prohibit possession of firearms on premises where alcohol is licensed to be served and to require that notice of the prohibition be posted at each premises.	Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/17/25)

<p>H 51</p>	<p>Rep. Lucy Boyden; Rep. Matthew Birong</p>	<p>An Act Relating To Miscellaneous Amendments To The Statutes Governing Alcoholic Beverages</p> <p>This bill proposes to: (1) authorize the holder of a fourth-class license to sell its products to not more than eight additional manufacturers or rectifiers; and (2) authorize manufacturers of malt beverages to acquire a retail shipping license and ship malt beverages to first- and second-class licensees.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/17/25)</p>
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VBA Legislative Update – Week 4 January 30, 2025

Governor Delivers Budget Address

On Tuesday, January 28, Governor Scott delivered his annual budget address. The Governor proposed a \$9 billion budget for FY26 which is about a 5% increase over the \$8.6 billion budget he signed into law last year. Although state accounts are strong with better-than-expected revenues — about 4% higher than state economists had projected last year — the urged lawmakers to limit additional spending and avoid any tax increases.

Some highlights of the FY26 budget include:

→ **Housing and Community Revitalization.**

- \$2 million base funding for the **Manufactured Home Improvement and Repair Program (MHIR)** to help with project costs for owner-occupied manufactured homes.
- \$4 million base funding for the **Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP)** which brings vacant rental units up to code and adds new units to existing buildings.
- \$9.1 million to the **Vermont Bond Bank** for the newly created Vermont Infrastructure Sustainability Fund (VISF) which will support municipal infrastructure projects statewide.
- \$15 million to the **Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA) Rental Revolving Loan Fund** which incentivizes developers for the creation and preservation of rental units for middle income households.
- \$15 million to the **VHFA Middle Income Homeownership Development Program** to support the construction and rehabilitation of affordable housing.
- \$2 million additional base funding to lift the cap on **Downtown and Village Center Tax Credits** from \$3 million annually to \$5 million annually.
- Called for **more Act 250 exemptions** to spur development.

→ **Assisting Vulnerable Populations and Public Safety Efforts.**

- \$500,000 to build a pilot **Recovery Campus** in the Northeast Kingdom for justice-involved individuals and \$617,850 base funding (\$1.5 million with federal match) to operate the facility.
- \$30.5 million plus \$8 million in existing base funding to continue the **emergency housing (hotel/motel) program** for unhoused individuals and families.
- \$3.4 million base funds for **the Housing Opportunity Program (HOP)** to provide the services associated with emergency shelter beds.
- \$2 million to expand **emergency shelter** bed capacity.
- \$650,000 additional base funding to build on the success of the Newport **pre-trial supervision pilot** by adding one more district office.
- \$300,000 to investigate and begin conversion of the Northeast Regional Correctional Facility into a **treatment-specific facility for incarcerated individuals.**

→ **Education.**

- \$77 million General Fund transfer to the Education Fund to stabilize education tax rates by **eliminating this year’s projected property tax increase**. This will provide relief for property owners. Some of this money comes from eliminating the **Universal School Meals** program.

→ **Affordability.**

- \$3.9 million for a full **income tax exemption on military pension** income, removing a major barrier to our veterans remaining in Vermont.
- \$4.5 million to expand the **Child Tax Credit** for income eligible families with children up to age 6. This fully refundable \$1,000 credit is currently available for children up to age 5.
- \$3 million to increase the Vermont percentage of the “childless” **Earned Income Tax Credit** from 38% to 100% of the federal amount. This initiative, fully refundable, would benefit lower income families without children.
- \$2.1 million to increase the **social security income tax exemption** threshold by \$5,000 to \$55,000 for single filers and \$70,000 for joint filers. Vermont is one of the few states that tax social security income, which is a major detriment to attracting and keeping retirees.

→ **Good Government.**

- \$4.4 million General Fund (total of \$10.8 million with federal funds) to bridge the transition away from “fee for service” medical care into a “Global Payment” program (called AHEAD). Another \$300,000 to enhance the Green Mountain Care Board’s regulatory capabilities to ensure it has the resources and knowledge base to oversee our health care reform efforts.
- \$5 million for **Vermont State Colleges**, the last payment in a 5-year commitment to help our state colleges transform into a unified university that provides the education and training to help every Vermonter succeed.
- \$3 million for the **Municipal Technical Assistance Program**, run by the Agency of Administration in partnership with regional planning commissions. This program assists rural communities with high needs but limited capacity to apply for federal and state funds to help with flood recovery or other pressing needs.

Headlines of Note

- [Phil Scott unveils \\$9 billion state budget proposal for 2026 focused on affordability](#)
- [Lawmakers Introduce Bill to Ban Smartphones in Vermont Schools](#)
- [Vermont Officials Still Wary After Trump Cancels Funding Freeze](#)
- [Vermonters can carry a gun into their town hall. Is that a good thing?](#)
- [Vermont Braces After White House Says Canadian Tariffs to Start](#)
- [Capitol Recap: Environmental advocates on defense after governor targets major climate laws](#)

VBA Bill Report

Last week, the VBA Government Affairs Committee had a robust discussion of [H.51](#). **The GAC continues to welcome feedback from members before they make a recommendation to the Board on whether the VBA should take a position on this bill.** The bill that makes two changes to alcohol laws of interest to the VBA. The bill, [H.51](#), would:

1. Authorize the holder of a fourth-class license to sell the products of not more than eight additional manufacturers or rectifiers. **Current law allows the sale of products of not more than 5 additional manufacturers.**
2. Authorize a manufacturer of malt beverages that operates a brewery in Vermont or anywhere in the United States to apply for a retail shipping license to sell up to 5,000 gallons of malt beverages (about 161 barrels) per year directly to 1st or 2nd class licensees (bar/restaurant or retail outlet) and deliver the beverages by mail, the manufacturer's own vehicle, or the vehicle of an employee of a manufacturer, provided that the beverages are sold on invoice, and no more than 100 gallons per month (about 20logs) are sold to any single 1st or 2nd class licensee. **Current law applies this provision to wine manufacturers only. This provision is an effort to equalize the laws between wine & beer manufacturers.**

At Friday's GAC meeting, there was general consensus that allowing small brewers to have relatively simple direct access to 1st and 2nd class licenses without establishing a distribution company would benefit Vermont's small manufacturers and is a good idea.

There was some concern that allowing similar direct access by out-of-state manufacturers could have unintended consequences by flooding the marketplace with new brands. This is exacerbated by the fact that Vermont manufacturers don't have direct shipping access to many states, states whose manufacturers do have access to Vermont's marketplace.

Some members asked whether we could limit this retail shipping licenses to Vermont manufacturers only. Unfortunately, laws that favor in-state businesses over out-of-state businesses are generally considered to be in violation of the [Commerce Clause](#) of the US Constitution.

As a side note, you will see in the bill report below, that we have introduced a [reciprocity bill again](#) this year. The bill was modeled after a similar law in Oregon. Unfortunately, the Oregon law was recently challenged by some Washington brewers that wanted direct-shipping access to Oregon consumers. The case was eventually settled when Oregon agreed to no longer enforce their reciprocity law and to permit out-of-state breweries to self-distribute beer to Oregon retailers. Oregon settled when it became clear that their reciprocity law would be found to be unconstitutional and in direct opposition to the US Supreme Courts holding in [Granholm](#). Consequently, it is unlikely that [H.110](#) will move forward.

No hearings are currently scheduled for these or other bills of interest.

**VBA Bill Report – Week 4
1/31/25**

Bill	Sponsors	Description	Status
H 24	Rep. Anne Donahue	<p>An Act Relating To Requiring Retail Businesses To Accept Cash</p> <p>This bill proposes to prohibit a retail business from refusing to accept cash payment.</p>	<p>Committees: House Commerce and Economic Development</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development (01/09/25)</p>
H 45	Rep. Mary-Katherine Stone; Rep. Tiffany Bluemle; Rep. Abbey Duke; Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Rep. Bram Kleppner; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Robert Hooper; Rep. Troy Headrick	<p>An Act Relating To Prohibiting Possession Of Firearms On Premises Where Alcohol Is Licensed To Be Served</p> <p>This bill proposes to prohibit possession of firearms on premises where alcohol is licensed to be served and to require that notice of the prohibition be posted at each premises.</p>	<p>Committees: House Judiciary</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary (01/21/25)</p>
H 51	Rep. Lucy Boyden; Rep. Matthew Birong	<p>An Act Relating To Miscellaneous Amendments To The Statutes Governing Alcoholic Beverages</p> <p>This bill proposes to: (1) authorize the holder of a fourth-class license to sell its products to not more than eight additional manufacturers or rectifiers; and (2) authorize manufacturers of malt beverages to acquire a retail shipping license and ship malt beverages to first- and second-class licensees.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/21/25)</p>
H 110	Rep. Lucy Boyden	<p>An Act Relating To A Reciprocity Requirement For Out-of-state Consumer Shipping Licenses</p> <p>This bill proposes to limit the issuance of out-of-state malt beverage consumer shipping licenses to breweries that are located in states that allow Vermont brewers to acquire consumer shipping licenses.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/28/25)</p>

<p>H 119</p>	<p>Rep. Carolyn Branagan</p>	<p>An Act Relating To The Beverage Container Redemption System</p> <p>This bill proposes to expand the scope of the beverage container redemption system to include cider, hard kombucha, noncarbonated water, and noncarbonated soft drinks. The bill also would increase the deposit for a container from five cents to 10 cents.</p>	<p>Committees: House Environment</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Environment (01/29/25)</p>
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VBA Legislative Update – Week 5 February 6, 2025

Lawmakers and Governor Scramble to Respond to Chaos in Washington

Whether it's tariffs, funding delays or cancelations, or new confusing policy directives, lawmakers, community leaders and the Governor are trying to make sense of seemingly senseless changes coming in rapid succession from the White House.

Last week, on the eve of an announced trade war with Canada, Vermont's largest trading partner, the Governor convened an interagency task force to examine the potential consequences of the tariffs that the White House had announced on certain imports from Canada, Mexico and China. Led by Secretary of Commerce and Community Development the group was charged with evaluating the possible affects the proposed tariffs could have on Vermont and identifying any potential responses or upsides. Substantially impacted economic sectors would include energy, housing and food – impacts that would most likely be felt by consumers. Although the tariffs were temporarily delayed, the task force will continue its work.

At the same time, as we have previously reported, Treasurer Mike Pieciak has convened a stakeholder group composed of policy experts, business and community leaders, and Vermont economists to take a broad look at the impacts of federal policy changes on Vermont's economy. The Treasurer's Task Force is assessing the economic impact of the incoming administration's policy changes and advising the Treasurer about federal policy and legal changes, and the opportunities or challenges they create for the Vermont economy, future state fiscal or financial policy, and for Vermonters' households and businesses. Last week, the Task Force hosted an [immigration panel for employers](#). You can follow and participate in the Treasurer's Task Force on the Federal Transition [here](#).

Headlines of Note

[Ways and Means: Legislative Lawyers Are as Busy as Heck](#)

[House gives initial approval to vital Budget Adjustment](#)

[Tariff Pause a Relief for Vermonters Scrambling to Prepare](#)

[Senate bill would regulate use of 'deepfakes' in leadup to Vermont elections](#)

[What USAID funding freeze means for Vermont](#)

[Final Reading: More money earmarked for school PCB cleanup in budget proposal](#)

[Hundreds protest Trump administration outside Vermont Statehouse](#)

VBA Bill Report

Last week, the VBA Government Affairs Committee voted to recommend that the VBA board take the following position on [H.51](#).

Section 1 of the bill would authorize the holder of a fourth-class license to sell the products of not more than eight additional manufacturers or rectifiers. Current law allows

the sale of products of not more than 5 additional manufacturers. **The GAC voted to recommend that the VBA support this provision.**

Section 2 of the bill would authorize a manufacturer of malt beverages that operates a brewery in Vermont or anywhere in the United States to apply for a retail shipping license to sell up to 5,000 gallons of malt beverages (about 161 barrels) per year directly to 1st or 2nd class licensees (bar/restaurant or retail outlet) and deliver the beverages by mail, the manufacturer’s own vehicle, or the vehicle of an employee of a manufacturer, provided that the beverages are sold on invoice, and no more than 100 gallons per month (about 20logs) are sold to any single 1st or 2nd class licensee. Current law applies this provision to wine manufacturers only. **The GAC voted to recommend that the VBA NOT support this provision and that, as an alternative, the VBA advocate for the adoption of a tiered distributors license scheme, to include an option for a distributors license to distribute a limited amount of product for a reduced license fee.**

In the end, committee members felt that allowing easy direct access by out-of-state manufacturers could have unintended consequences by flooding the marketplace with new brands. This would exacerbate the already unlevel playing field that prohibits Vermont manufacturers from direct shipping to many states, states whose manufacturers do have access to Vermont’s marketplace. The committee decided that the recommended alternative could serve to limit out-of-state breweries from easy access to the Vermont marketplace and allow smaller VT breweries the opportunity to self-distribute as they will no longer be paying the same amount as large wholesalers.

No hearings are currently scheduled for these or other bills of interest.

VBA Bill Report – Week 5 2/8/25			
Bill	Sponsors	Description	Status
H 24	Rep. Anne Donahue	An Act Relating To Requiring Retail Businesses To Accept Cash This bill proposes to prohibit a retail business from refusing to accept cash payment.	Committees: House Commerce and Economic Development Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development (01/09/25)
H 45	Rep. Mary-Katherine Stone; Rep. Tiffany Bluemle; Rep. Abbey Duke; Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Bram Kleppner; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Robert Hooper;	An Act Relating To Prohibiting Possession Of Firearms On Premises Where Alcohol Is Licensed To Be Served This bill proposes to prohibit possession of firearms on premises where alcohol is licensed to be served and to require that notice of the	Committees: House Judiciary Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary (01/21/25)

	Rep. Troy Headrick	prohibition be posted at each premises.	
H 51	Rep. Lucy Boyden; Rep. Matthew Birong	<p>An Act Relating To Miscellaneous Amendments To The Statutes Governing Alcoholic Beverages</p> <p>This bill proposes to: (1) authorize the holder of a fourth-class license to sell its products to not more than eight additional manufacturers or rectifiers; and (2) authorize manufacturers of malt beverages to acquire a retail shipping license and ship malt beverages to first- and second-class licensees.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/21/25)</p>
H 110	Rep. Lucy Boyden	<p>An Act Relating To A Reciprocity Requirement For Out-of-state Consumer Shipping Licenses</p> <p>This bill proposes to limit the issuance of out-of-state malt beverage consumer shipping licenses to breweries that are located in states that allow Vermont brewers to acquire consumer shipping licenses.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/28/25)</p>
H 119	Rep. Carolyn Branagan	<p>An Act Relating To The Beverage Container Redemption System</p> <p>This bill proposes to expand the scope of the beverage container redemption system to include cider, hard kombucha, noncarbonated water, and noncarbonated soft drinks. The bill also would increase the deposit for a container from five cents to 10 cents.</p>	<p>Committees: House Environment</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Environment (01/29/25)</p>

VBA Legislative Update – Week 6 February 15, 2025

Business Leaders Call on Lawmakers to Reject Efforts to Divert Payroll Tax Away from Childcare

The Governor’s FY26 budget proposes to take \$20m from the proceeds of the child care pay roll tax and use it for purposes unrelated to childcare. This week [a powerful group of business leaders](#) from around the state called on lawmakers to reject the Governor’s proposal and to instead use the payroll tax proceeds for their intended purposes. The leaders noted the many gains that have been made since the passage of Act 76, Vermont’s historic comprehensive child care law, and urged lawmakers to stay the course in order to fully realize the goals of the law.

The House Appropriations Committee is working through the Governor’s proposed budget and should have a proposal ready for consideration by the full House by the end of March.

Headlines of Note

- [Vermont Aid Workers Reel in Wake of Rapid USAID Cuts](#)
- [Layoffs, furloughs and callbacks. Almost daily drops of new White House policies disrupt Vermont’s workforce.](#)
- [Bill Shouldice to replace Craig Bolio as Vermont tax commissioner](#)
- [Attorney General Charity Clark sues Trump four times and counting](#)
- [Democrats throw cold water on Scott’s school choice proposal](#)
- [Lawmakers try to address limitations of Vermont's hate crime law](#)

Hearing to Consider whether to repeal the scheduled sunset on to-go drinks.

On Wednesday afternoon, [House Government Operations and Military Affairs](#) will be considering draft legislation regarding the scheduled repeal of the pandemic-era law authorizing to-go drinks ([7 VSA §230](#)).

Under current law, first- and third-class licensees may sell malt beverages, vinous beverages, and spirits-based prepared drinks for off-premises consumption when accompanied by a food order and when otherwise in compliance with the provisions of [7 VSA §230](#). The law was enacted during the pandemic and is scheduled to sunset on July 1, 2025.

VBA Bill Report

VBA Bill Report – Week 6 2/15/25			
Bill	Sponsors	Description	Status

H 24	Rep. Anne Donahue	<p>An Act Relating To Requiring Retail Businesses To Accept Cash</p> <p>This bill proposes to prohibit a retail business from refusing to accept cash payment.</p>	<p>Committees: House Commerce and Economic Development</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development (01/09/25)</p>
H 45	Rep. Mary-Katherine Stone; Rep. Tiffany Bluemle; Rep. Abbey Duke; Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Rep. Bram Kleppner; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Robert Hooper; Rep. Troy Headrick	<p>An Act Relating To Prohibiting Possession Of Firearms On Premises Where Alcohol Is Licensed To Be Served</p> <p>This bill proposes to prohibit possession of firearms on premises where alcohol is licensed to be served and to require that notice of the prohibition be posted at each premises.</p>	<p>Committees: House Judiciary</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary (01/21/25)</p>
H 51	Rep. Lucy Boyden; Rep. Matthew Birong	<p>An Act Relating To Miscellaneous Amendments To The Statutes Governing Alcoholic Beverages</p> <p>This bill proposes to: (1) authorize the holder of a fourth-class license to sell its products to not more than eight additional manufacturers or rectifiers; and (2) authorize manufacturers of malt beverages to acquire a retail shipping license and ship malt beverages to first- and second-class licensees.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/21/25)</p>
H 110	Rep. Lucy Boyden	<p>An Act Relating To A Reciprocity Requirement For Out-of-state Consumer Shipping Licenses</p> <p>This bill proposes to limit the issuance of out-of-state malt beverage consumer shipping licenses to breweries that are located in states that allow Vermont brewers to acquire consumer shipping licenses.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/28/25)</p>

H 119	Rep. Carolyn Branagan	<p>An Act Relating To The Beverage Container Redemption System</p> <p>This bill proposes to expand the scope of the beverage container redemption system to include cider, hard kombucha, noncarbonated water, and noncarbonated soft drinks. The bill also would increase the deposit for a container from five cents to 10 cents.</p>	Committees: House Environment Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Environment (01/29/25)
H 144	Rep. Brian Minier; Bridget Burkhardt; Rep. Emilie Krasnow; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Laura Sibililia; Rep. Leonora Dodge; Rep. Lisa Hango; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun	<p>An Act Relating To Enhancing Food Allergen Awareness In Food Service Establishments</p> <p>This bill proposes to require owners and operators of food service establishments to designate employees to complete a food allergen training program. It further proposes to require food service establishments to post signage regarding food allergens.</p>	Committees: House Human Services Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/05/25)

VBA Legislative Update – Week 7 February 22, 2025

Reform Efforts Creeping Along

We are one week away from the legislature's Town Meeting week break (March 3-7), and two legislative weeks away from the March 14 Crossover deadline (the date by which a bill must move out of its committee of jurisdiction if it is going to be considered by the other body this session), and major reform efforts are struggling to take shape.

One major reform effort proposed by Governor Scott is a [massive restructuring](#) of K-12 education in Vermont. House and Senate committees have spent many hours taking testimony from state education officials, finance experts and the consultants who helped to design the Governor's plan, but several fundamental questions remain unanswered. In addition, lawmakers have yet to receive proposed statutory language (i.e. a bill) from the Administration that would codify the wholesale restructuring of Vermont's education system. Without statutory language it is difficult, if not impossible for lawmakers to dig into the necessary, nitty-gritty details. It's possible that these delays could push the session into overtime – something nobody wants.

Other major reform proposals coming from the Scott Administration, including efforts related to public safety, housing and energy have also been slow to crystalize.

Headlines of Note

[Education Proposal Is Latest Attempt to Address Long-standing Challenges](#)

[Scott's plan to repeal emissions mandates draws scorn from advocates.](#)

[How the DOGE effect is being felt in Vermont.](#)

[Final Reading: Amid fraying relations, Canada's top New England diplomat visits Montpelier](#)

[Vermont Conversation: 'An attempted coup' — Rep. Becca Balint on Trump's power grab](#)

[Final Reading: Vermont officials are trying to navigate Trump's executive actions](#)

[Democrats race to refine education reform package](#)

[Gov. Phil Scott's plan to cut free school meals for all gets bipartisan pushback](#)

Hearing to Consider whether to repeal the scheduled sunset on to-go drinks.

On Friday afternoon, [House Government Operations and Military Affairs](#) voted to approve [legislation](#) that would repeal the sunset of the pandemic-era law authorizing to-go drinks ([7 VSA §230](#)).

Under current law, first- and third-class licensees may sell malt beverages, vinous beverages, and spirits-based prepared drinks for off-premises consumption when accompanied by a food order and when otherwise in compliance with the provisions of [7 VSA §230](#). The law was

enacted during the pandemic and is scheduled to sunset on July 1, 2025. The bill that was approved would repeal the sunset of this law resulting in the authority for to-go drink to be a permanent feature of Vermont law.

The bill will next be considered by the full House before it goes to the Senate.

No Miscellaneous Alcohol Bill to be considered this year by the House

Last week, the [House Government Operations and Military Affairs](#) Chair, Matt Birong, announced that his committee would not be considering any new alcohol-related legislation this session.

VBA Bill Report

VBA Bill Report – Week 6 2/15/25			
Bill	Sponsors	Description	Status
H 24	Rep. Anne Donahue	An Act Relating To Requiring Retail Businesses To Accept Cash This bill proposes to prohibit a retail business from refusing to accept cash payment.	Committees: House Commerce and Economic Development Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development (01/09/25)
H 45	Rep. Mary-Katherine Stone; Rep. Tiffany Bluemle; Rep. Abbey Duke; Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Rep. Bram Kleppner; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Robert Hooper; Rep. Troy Headrick	An Act Relating To Prohibiting Possession Of Firearms On Premises Where Alcohol Is Licensed To Be Served This bill proposes to prohibit possession of firearms on premises where alcohol is licensed to be served and to require that notice of the prohibition be posted at each premises.	Committees: House Judiciary Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary (01/21/25)
H 51	Rep. Lucy Boyden; Rep. Matthew Birong	An Act Relating To Miscellaneous Amendments To The Statutes Governing Alcoholic Beverages This bill proposes to: (1) authorize the holder of a fourth-class license to sell its products to not more than eight additional manufacturers or rectifiers; and (2) authorize manufacturers of malt	Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/21/25)

		beverages to acquire a retail shipping license and ship malt beverages to first- and second-class licensees.	
H 110	Rep. Lucy Boyden	<p>An Act Relating To A Reciprocity Requirement For Out-of-state Consumer Shipping Licenses</p> <p>This bill proposes to limit the issuance of out-of-state malt beverage consumer shipping licenses to breweries that are located in states that allow Vermont brewers to acquire consumer shipping licenses.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/28/25)</p>
H 119	Rep. Carolyn Branagan	<p>An Act Relating To The Beverage Container Redemption System</p> <p>This bill proposes to expand the scope of the beverage container redemption system to include cider, hard kombucha, noncarbonated water, and noncarbonated soft drinks. The bill also would increase the deposit for a container from five cents to 10 cents.</p>	<p>Committees: House Environment</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Environment (01/29/25)</p>
H 144	Rep. Brian Minier; Bridget Burkhardt; Rep. Emilie Krasnow; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Laura Sibilie; Rep. Leonora Dodge; Rep. Lisa Hango; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun	<p>An Act Relating To Enhancing Food Allergen Awareness In Food Service Establishments</p> <p>This bill proposes to require owners and operators of food service establishments to designate employees to complete a food allergen training program. It further proposes to require food service establishments to post signage regarding food allergens.</p>	<p>Committees: House Human Services</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/05/25)</p>
H 260	Rep. Esme Cole; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Ela Chapin; Herb Olson; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Kate	<p>An Act Relating To Prohibiting Certain Substances In Food Manufactured, Sold, Or Distributed In Vermont</p>	<p>Committees: House Human Services</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/19/25)</p>

	McCann; Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Mary Howard; Robert "Rob" North; VL Coffin	This bill proposes to prohibit the manufacture, sale, delivery, or distribution in commerce of food containing brominated vegetable oil, potassium bromate, propylparaben, or red dye no. 3.	
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VAB Legislative Update – Week 8 March 1, 2025

→ Town Meeting Week Break

The legislature will be on a break next week, March 3 -7. There will be no weekly report next week.

→ House and Senate Agree on Mid-Year Budget Adjustment – Veto Likely

On Friday, the legislature sent the Governor their annual [Budget Adjustment Act](#). Although the legislature and the Governor agree on 99% of the spending proposals in the bill, they disagree on a few key items. These disagreements could result in the first veto of the session. The Governor has 5 days to sign or veto the bill

The legislature's proposal allocates \$1.8 million to preserve expanded eligibility for the state's emergency motel housing program, which currently shelters about 1,400 vulnerable Vermonters, many of whom are children. The current eligibility requirements are set to expire on April 1. Democratic lawmakers argue that failing to supplement funding now would result in mass unsheltering. Republican Gov. Phil Scott and his administration oppose the funding, arguing that the motel program does not provide positive outcomes and that spending decisions should be delayed until more is known about potential federal funding cuts.

Other highlights in the bill include:

- Funds courthouse security contracts and current information technology expenses in the Judiciary.
- Funds caseload and utilization adjustments in the Agency of Human Services.
- Funds various costs at the Vermont Veterans' Home, including \$5.9 million General Fund for traveling nurses.
- Funds increased demand for the Agency of Education's Adult Diploma Program.
- Provides additional \$1.0 million Cannabis Regulation Fund to the Department of Health for substance use prevention programming.
- Provides additional \$1.3 million federal funds for 3SquaresVT regular benefit caseload adjustment.
- Provides \$21.0 for nursing home emergency fiscal relief.
- Provides \$24.5 for nursing home Medicaid bed day adjustment.
- Provides \$10 million for provider stabilization grants for Medicaid providers.
- Provides \$50K to the Judiciary to construct ADA-accessible bathrooms in the Essex Meeting House.
- Provides \$2.8 million to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board for developmentally disabled housing pilot projects.
- Adds \$1.8 million to support General Assistance Emergency Housing, extending emergency winter weather housing provisions for eligible populations through June 30, 2025.

- Adds \$8.6 million to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board for various housing initiatives.
- Transfers an additional \$5.7 million from the General funds, for a total of \$6.5 million, to the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund for State contribution to local FEMA match for flood recovery.
- Adds \$27.8K to the Attorney General office Appellate Unit for a new position.
- Adds \$39.7K to the Human Rights Commission for two new positions.
- Adds \$1.8 million for grants to municipalities impacted by floods.

→ **Bill to extend to-go drinks passes the House**

On Friday, the House gave final approval to [a bill, H.339](#), that would repeal the sunset of the pandemic-era law authorizing to-go drinks ([7 VSA §230](#)).

Under current law, first- and third-class licensees may sell malt beverages, vinous beverages, and spirits-based prepared drinks for off-premises consumption when accompanied by a food order and when otherwise in compliance with the provisions of [7 VSA §230](#). The law was enacted during the pandemic and is scheduled to sunset on July 1, 2025. The bill that was approved would repeal the sunset of this law resulting in the authority for to-go drink to be a permanent feature of Vermont law.

The bill will next be considered by the Senate.

→ **Lawmakers Introduce Bill to Raise Beer Taxes – No Action Expected This Year**

A [group of lawmakers](#) introduced a bill this week that would dramatically increase the gallonage tax on malt beverages – from \$.265 per gallon to \$1.36 per gallon regardless of ABV – a 500% increase!!

The purpose of bill, [H.376](#), is to raise money to “offset the continuing costs of support services” for “mental health treatment and recovery” related to alcohol consumption. The bill would also require all alcohol beverages sold in Vermont to include a label that states the alcohol content of the beverage in U.S. Standard Drinks as well as a warning label that states: “WARNING: Drinking alcoholic beverages may increase cancer risk and, if consumed during pregnancy, can cause birth defects.”

However, as Bob Montgomery might say, “don’t get your tri-clamps in a knot,” because it is unlikely that this bill will get any air-time this year. And even if it were to gain traction, it is unlikely that the Governor would support this kind of tax increase. That said, its introduction offers an opportunity to engage with the bill’s sponsors and other lawmakers to communicate craft brewers’ concerns with such a dramatic tax increase proposal.

→ **Local Headlines of Note**

[‘Very, very financially fragile’: Vermont’s federally qualified health centers are struggling](#)
[Final Reading: Unsalaries school support staff want to be eligible for unemployment insurance](#)
[Gov. Phil Scott’s ‘education transformation’ bill hits the Legislature, all 176 pages of it](#)
[Proposed tax breaks for military retirees gain steam in Montpelier](#)
[Potential veto looms over Democrats’ push to preserve emergency motel housing eligibility](#)
[Thousands call in to telephone town hall hosted by Vt. congressional delegation](#)
[Will fired federal workers in Vt. be eligible for unemployment benefits?](#)

→ **VBA Bill Report**

We are not expecting action on any alcohol-related legislation this session.

VBA BILL REPORT – WEEK 8 FEBRUARY 28, 2025			
Bill	Sponsors	Description	Status
H 24	Rep. Anne Donahue	An Act Relating To Requiring Retail Businesses To Accept Cash This bill proposes to prohibit a retail business from refusing to accept cash payment.	Committees: House Commerce and Economic Development Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development (01/09/25)
H 45	Rep. Mary-Katherine Stone; Rep. Tiffany Bluemle; Rep. Abbey Duke; Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Bram Kleppner; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Robert Hooper; Rep. Troy Headrick	An Act Relating To Prohibiting Possession Of Firearms On Premises Where Alcohol Is Licensed To Be Served This bill proposes to prohibit possession of firearms on premises where alcohol is licensed to be served and to require that notice of the prohibition be posted at each premises.	Committees: House Judiciary Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary (01/21/25)
H 51	Rep. Lucy Boyden; Rep. Matthew Birong	An Act Relating To Miscellaneous Amendments To The Statutes Governing Alcoholic Beverages This bill proposes to: (1) authorize the holder of a fourth-class license to sell its products to not more than eight additional manufacturers or rectifiers; and (2) authorize manufacturers of malt beverages to acquire a retail shipping license and ship malt beverages to first- and second-class licensees.	Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/21/25)

H 110	Rep. Lucy Boyden	<p>An Act Relating To A Reciprocity Requirement For Out-of-state Consumer Shipping Licenses</p> <p>This bill proposes to limit the issuance of out-of-state malt beverage consumer shipping licenses to breweries that are located in states that allow Vermont brewers to acquire consumer shipping licenses.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/28/25)</p>
H 119	Rep. Carolyn Branagan	<p>An Act Relating To The Beverage Container Redemption System</p> <p>This bill proposes to expand the scope of the beverage container redemption system to include cider, hard kombucha, noncarbonated water, and noncarbonated soft drinks. The bill also would increase the deposit for a container from five cents to 10 cents.</p>	<p>Committees: House Environment</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Environment (01/29/25)</p>
H 144	Rep. Brian Minier; Bridget Burkhardt; Rep. Emilie Krasnow; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Laura Sibilia; Rep. Leonora Dodge; Rep. Lisa Hango; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun	<p>An Act Relating To Enhancing Food Allergen Awareness In Food Service Establishments</p> <p>This bill proposes to require owners and operators of food service establishments to designate employees to complete a food allergen training program. It further proposes to require food service establishments to post signage regarding food allergens.</p>	<p>Committees: House Human Services</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/05/25)</p>
H 260	Rep. Esme Cole; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Ela Chapin; Herb Olson; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Kate McCann; Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Mary Howard; Robert "Rob" North; VL Coffin	<p>An Act Relating To Prohibiting Certain Substances In Food Manufactured, Sold, Or Distributed In Vermont</p> <p>This bill proposes to prohibit the manufacture, sale, delivery, or distribution in commerce of food containing brominated vegetable oil, potassium bromate, propylparaben, or red dye no. 3.</p>	<p>Committees: House Human Services</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/19/25)</p>
H 339	House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs	<p>An Act Relating To Removing The Repeal Of 7 V.s.a. § 230</p> <p>This bill proposes to remove the repeal of 7 V.S.A. § 230 (sale of alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption).</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Passed the House</p>

H 376	Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Brian Cina; Rep. Carol Ode; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Mari Cordes; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Phil Pouech; Rep. Troy Headrick	<p>An Act Relating To The Creation Of The Treatment And Recovery Fund And The Labeling And Taxation Of Alcoholic Beverages</p> <p>This bill proposes to (1) require all alcoholic beverages sold in the State to bear a label containing a statement of the alcohol content in U.S. Standard Drinks; (2) increase the gallonage taxes on malt beverages and vinous beverages; (3) increase the excise tax on spirits; (4) create the Treatment and Recovery Fund, dedicate the proceeds of the gallonage tax to the Fund, and establish the purposes for which monies from the Fund may be disbursed; and (5) require the Division of Liquor Control t...</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (02/26/25)</p>
H 377	Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Rep. Chea Waters Evans	<p>An Act Relating To The Local Media Advertising Tax Credit</p> <p>This bill proposes to create an income tax credit for small businesses that purchase advertising in local media outlets.</p>	<p>Committees: House Ways and Means</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Ways and Means (02/26/25)</p>
S 88	Sen. Wendy Harrison; Sen. Alison Clarkson; Sen. Anne Watson; Joseph "Joe" Major; Sen. Randolph Brock; Sen. Rebecca White; Robert "Rob" Plunkett	<p>An Act Relating To Creating An Enhanced Growth Incentive For Employee-owned Businesses</p> <p>This bill proposes to create a new enhanced incentive for locally owned and controlled employee-owned businesses within the Vermont Employment Growth Incentive Program (VEGI).</p>	<p>Committees: Senate Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read 1st time & referred to Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs (02/25/25)</p>

VBA Legislative Update – Week 9 March 15, 2025

→ **Lawmakers Again Take Aim at Consumer Data Privacy Protections.**

In the absence of federal action, many states, including Vermont, are adopting their own consumer data privacy laws. The patchwork of state laws creates obvious challenges for multi-state (and multi-national) businesses. Last year the legislature attempted to pass comprehensive consumer data privacy protections but faced strong opposition by a broad coalition of business and non-profit groups. While most organizations support the concept of data privacy and are willing to adopt additional measures to strengthen data privacy practices, there were many details in [the bill](#) of concern to various stakeholders. The most unanimous sticking point in the bill was the proposed enforcement mechanism in the bill, a private right of action (PRA). Stakeholders urged instead that the law be enforced by the Attorney General, where most believe enforcement would be reasonable. In the end, last year's bill was [vetoed](#) by the Governor and the Senate was not able to override.

This year lawmakers are back at it, trying to pass a consumer data protection bill. Two competing measures were introduced in the Senate – one, S.71, endorsed by national data privacy organizations, and one, S.93, endorsed by the business community. The crucial differences between the two bills [can be found here](#). The biggest difference is around the enforcement mechanism – S.71 includes a private right of action.

Senate Institutions Committee considered both bills. Business community witnesses [testified](#) that S.93 represents clearer compliance guidelines, better alignment with existing state and federal regulations, and a more practical framework for consumer data protection without excessive litigation risk. Consumer protection [advocates testified](#) that S.71 represents stronger and more comprehensive protections for consumer data without unnecessarily hamstringing business operations.

Originally, the Committee took up S.71; however, by Thursday of this week, they had replaced the bill's language with language from S.93 and [passed the legislation on a vote of 5-0](#).

From the perspective of Vermont's craft brewers, it's unlikely that either version of the bill would capture most of you. As introduced, S.71 would have applied to any business that controls or processes "the personal data of more than **25,000 consumers.**" **As passed** by the committee, it only applies to business that "controlled or processed the personal data of more than **100,000 consumers.**"

When the bill makes it way to the House, we expect it will get a chilly reception. A bill, H.208, that mirrors the original provisions of S.71, was introduced in the House and has the strong support of the House Commerce and Economic Development committee. Stay tuned...

→ **Local Headlines of Note**

[Lawmakers seek to lower Vermont hospital costs, strengthen health care regulator](#)

[Some Think Scott Should Do More to Stand Up to Trump](#)

[In first veto of 2025, Phil Scott strikes down spending bill that would extend motel stays](#)

[House bill would add floss and 2 more products to Vermont's PFAS regulations](#)

[Final Reading: Health care workers still face threats and attacks in Vermont's hospitals, advocates say](#)

[Trump delays tariffs again, sparking more uncertainty for Vermont officials and businesses](#)

[Concerns grow as Copley Hospital set to vote on fate of birthing center](#)

→ **VBA Bill Report**

Aside from [H.339](#), which makes permanent in law the authority to sell To-Go drinks when accompanied by a food order, we are not expecting any action on alcohol-related legislation this year. H.339 is now in the Senate Economic Development Committee. We do not expect consideration of this bill for a few weeks.

Of note, the Chair of the House Government Operations and Military Affairs, Rep. Birong, has told us that he no intention of taking up for action [H.376](#), a bill that would quintuple the gallonage tax on malt beverages.

VBA BILL REPORT – WEEK 9 MARCH 15, 2025			
Bill	Sponsors	Description	Status
H 24	Rep. Anne Donahue	An Act Relating To Requiring Retail Businesses To Accept Cash This bill proposes to prohibit a retail business from refusing to accept cash payment.	Committees: House Commerce and Economic Development Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development (01/09/25)
H 45	Rep. Mary-Katherine Stone; Rep. Tiffany Bluemle; Rep. Abbey Duke; Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Bram Kleppner; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Robert Hooper; Rep. Troy Headrick	An Act Relating To Prohibiting Possession Of Firearms On Premises Where Alcohol Is Licensed To Be Served This bill proposes to prohibit possession of firearms on premises where alcohol is licensed to be served and to require that notice of the prohibition be posted at each premises.	Committees: House Judiciary Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary (01/21/25)

H 51	Rep. Lucy Boyden; Rep. Matthew Birong	<p>An Act Relating To Miscellaneous Amendments To The Statutes Governing Alcoholic Beverages</p> <p>This bill proposes to: (1) authorize the holder of a fourth-class license to sell its products to not more than eight additional manufacturers or rectifiers; and (2) authorize manufacturers of malt beverages to acquire a retail shipping license and ship malt beverages to first- and second-class licensees.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/21/25)</p>
H 110	Rep. Lucy Boyden	<p>An Act Relating To A Reciprocity Requirement For Out-of-state Consumer Shipping Licenses</p> <p>This bill proposes to limit the issuance of out-of-state malt beverage consumer shipping licenses to breweries that are located in states that allow Vermont brewers to acquire consumer shipping licenses.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/28/25)</p>
H 119	Rep. Carolyn Branagan	<p>An Act Relating To The Beverage Container Redemption System</p> <p>This bill proposes to expand the scope of the beverage container redemption system to include cider, hard kombucha, noncarbonated water, and noncarbonated soft drinks. The bill also would increase the deposit for a container from five cents to 10 cents.</p>	<p>Committees: House Environment</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Environment (01/29/25)</p>
H 144	Rep. Brian Minier; Bridget Burkhardt; Rep. Emilie Krasnow; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Laura Sibilia; Rep. Leonora Dodge; Rep. Lisa Hango; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun	<p>An Act Relating To Enhancing Food Allergen Awareness In Food Service Establishments</p> <p>This bill proposes to require owners and operators of food service establishments to designate employees to complete a food allergen training program. It further proposes to require food service establishments to post signage regarding food allergens.</p>	<p>Committees: House Human Services</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/05/25)</p>

H 260	Rep. Esme Cole; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Ela Chapin; Herb Olson; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Kate McCann; Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Mary Howard; Robert "Rob" North; VL Coffin	<p>An Act Relating To Prohibiting Certain Substances In Food Manufactured, Sold, Or Distributed In Vermont</p> <p>This bill proposes to prohibit the manufacture, sale, delivery, or distribution in commerce of food containing brominated vegetable oil, potassium bromate, propylparaben, or red dye no. 3.</p>	<p>Committees: House Human Services</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/19/25)</p>
H 339	House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs	<p>An Act Relating To Removing The Repeal Of 7 V.s.a. § 230</p> <p>This bill proposes to remove the repeal of 7 V.S.A. § 230 (sale of alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption).</p>	<p>Committees: Senate Economic Development Housing and General Affairs Committee</p> <p>Status: As Passed the House</p>
H 376	Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Brian Cina; Rep. Carol Ode; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Mari Cordes; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Phil Pouech; Rep. Troy Headrick	<p>An Act Relating To The Creation Of The Treatment And Recovery Fund And The Labeling And Taxation Of Alcoholic Beverages</p> <p>This bill proposes to (1) require all alcoholic beverages sold in the State to bear a label containing a statement of the alcohol content in U.S. Standard Drinks; (2) increase the gallonage taxes on malt beverages and vinous beverages; (3) increase the excise tax on spirits; (4) create the Treatment and Recovery Fund, dedicate the proceeds of the gallonage tax to the Fund, and establish the purposes for which monies from the Fund may be disbursed; and (5) require the Division of Liquor Control t...</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (02/26/25)</p>
H 377	Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Rep. Chea Waters Evans	<p>An Act Relating To The Local Media Advertising Tax Credit</p> <p>This bill proposes to create an income tax credit for small businesses that purchase advertising in local media outlets.</p>	<p>Committees: House Ways and Means</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Ways and Means (02/26/25)</p>

<p><u>S 88</u></p>	<p>Sen. Wendy Harrison; Sen. Alison Clarkson; Sen. Anne Watson; Joseph "Joe" Major; Sen. Randolph Brock; Sen. Rebecca White; Robert "Rob" Plunkett</p>	<p>An Act Relating To Creating An Enhanced Growth Incentive For Employee-owned Businesses</p> <p>This bill proposes to create a new enhanced incentive for locally owned and controlled employee-owned businesses within the Vermont Employment Growth Incentive Program (VEGI).</p>	<p>Committees: Senate Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read 1st time & referred to Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs (02/25/25)</p>
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VBA Legislative Update – Week 10 March 22, 2025

Montpelier Reeling from Trump Administration Actions and Bracing for More

Everyday seems to bring more bad news for Vermonters and the Federal services they rely on. It's hard to keep up. Lawmakers in Montpelier get regular reports from state agencies, business leaders and their constituents, all of whom are scrambling to plug budget holes as they plan for more cuts and uncertainty. Unfortunately, the announced and planned cuts are far too massive for Vermont tax payers to fill the gaps. Some examples of what lawmakers are trying to grapple with include:

→ **Tariffs on Trade with Canada.** In February the Trump Administration announced a round of 25% tariffs on goods from Mexico and Canada, triggering 25% retaliatory levies from Canada. At the time, Ontario also said it would pull American alcohol products from its shelves. Ultimately, Trump granted a reprieve on Canadian and Mexican goods covered by the North American trade agreement until April 2. However, about 60% of Canadian products are still subject to the duties. As Canada is one of Vermont's biggest trading partners, the impacts of these tariffs in Vermont have been widespread, including:

- Caledonia Spirits. A shipment of spirits, ordered by the Société des alcools du Québec (SAQ)— an entity that's responsible for the trade of alcoholic beverages in the province — has been sitting on a shipping dock at Montpelier-based Barr Hill by Caledonia Spirits for about a month. The SAQ called off the order shortly after Trump announced the tariffs against Canada in February,
- Kingdom Brewing, like a number of Vermont craft brewers, import their beer cans from Canada, and are impacted by aluminum tariffs.
- Vermont industries have also had to contend with boycotts from Canadians, which have upended a tourism and hospitality sector that relies heavily on visitors from the north. Jay Peak ski resort and Hill Farmstead Brewery, among others — reported they had seen a steep drop in visitors from Canada in recent weeks.
- Morrison's Custom Feeds in Barnet, a farm animal feed company, experienced a \$5,000 increase in the price for one truckload of soybean meal from Canada.

→ **US Department of Agriculture Cuts.** Earlier this month, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture was notified that the USDA had paused or canceled tens of millions of dollars in funding for agricultural programs across the state, including:

- The cancelation of two programs — the Local Food Purchase Assistance Program and the Local Food for Schools and Child Care Cooperative Agreement, respectively — that the USDA had previously pledged to support. The funding, about \$1.7 million, helps supply locally grown Vermont produce into schools and child care centers, food shelves and through grant-funded community supported agriculture shares
- A “pause” on a \$10.7 million grant to assist farmers with installing water quality projects designed to keep Vermont waterways free of farm-related pollution.

- A “pause” on \$9.5 million for the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center, an organization that supports dairy businesses in the development, production, marketing and distribution of dairy products.

→ **US Department of Transportation Cuts.** The Vermont Agency of Transportation was ordered by the US Department of Transportation to “review” certain federal grants already in the pipeline to determine whether the projects slated for support relate to “diversity, equity and inclusion,” “climate change,” “environmental justice” or “gender,” as well as to review projects “whose primary purpose is bicycle infrastructure.” Projects in any of those categories are slated to be cut.

Some of the projects impacted include, among others:

- Roadway and pedestrian safety improvements in downtown Burlington and St. Albans, as well as along the mountain access road in Killington.
- Funds for a planned rebuild of the Winooski River bridge between Burlington and Winooski,
- Funds for a new pedestrian bridge planned over Interstate 89 in South Burlington, and
- A buildout of electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the state.

→ **US Dept of Education Cuts.** Last week, the Trump Administration announced plans to dismantle the US Department of Education. The impacts of in Vermont are yet unknown. Overall, the Vermont Agency of Education, in FY24, received about \$490 million in federal dollars, more than 90% of which it passed on as grants, including:

- \$68 million the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the state receives more than annually from the feds, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act provides another \$37.5 million for Vermont’s schools,

→ **Bracing for [major cuts to Medicaid](#).** Federal GOP lawmakers are [on a mission to cut \\$880 billion](#) from Medicaid spending. This could translate to a loss of [\\$1 billion](#) in health care benefits to Vermonters. Last week, Vermont lawmakers received a [dire menu of options](#).

→ **Local Headlines of Note**

[Scott administration rejects compromise on motel housing funding](#)

[As US-Canada relations sour, Vermont businesses are facing boycotts](#)

[Vermont Has a Drinking Problem. It's Time to Talk About It.](#)

[Bears are waking up, Vermonters should take down birdfeeders](#)

[Essex residents to weigh in on Amazon facility](#)

[DOGE Cuts Will Hobble Defenses Against Housing Discrimination](#)

[How will Trump’s push to dismantle the Department of Education affect Vermont?](#)

→ **VBA Bill Report**

Updates:

- Aside from [H.339](#), which makes permanent in law the authority to sell To-Go drinks when accompanied by a food order, we are not expecting any action on alcohol-related legislation this year. H.339 is now in the Senate Economic Development Committee. We do not expect consideration of this bill for a few weeks.

- As previously reported, the Chair of the House Government Operations and Military Affairs, Rep. Birong, has told us that he has no plans this session to take up [H.376](#), a bill that would quintuple the gallonage tax on malt beverages.
- The GAC will be working over the next several months to consider and develop a tiered licensing proposal – for either (or both) a manufacturer’s license or a distributor’s license. One of the goals of a proposal will be to make it easier for small manufacturers to get limited amounts of their product to bars, restaurants and retail outlets. The GAC will look at other state models, seek input from VBA members, and consult with stakeholders.

VBA BILL REPORT – WEEK 10 MARCH 23, 2025			
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H 24	Rep. Anne Donahue	<p>An Act Relating to Requiring Retail Businesses to Accept Cash</p> <p>This bill proposes to prohibit a retail business from refusing to accept cash payment.</p>	<p>Committees: House Commerce and Economic Development</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development (01/09/25)</p>
H 45	Rep. Mary-Katherine Stone; Rep. Tiffany Bluemle; Rep. Abbey Duke; Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Bram Kleppner; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Robert Hooper; Rep. Troy Headrick	<p>An Act Relating to Prohibiting Possession of Firearms on Premises Where Alcohol Is Licensed To Be Served</p> <p>This bill proposes to prohibit possession of firearms on premises where alcohol is licensed to be served and to require that notice of the prohibition be posted at each premises.</p>	<p>Committees: House Judiciary</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary (01/21/25)</p>
H 51	Rep. Lucy Boyden; Rep. Matthew Birong	<p>An Act Relating to Miscellaneous Amendments to The Statutes Governing Alcoholic Beverages</p> <p>This bill proposes to: (1) authorize the holder of a fourth-class license to sell its products to not more than eight additional manufacturers or rectifiers; and (2) authorize manufacturers of malt beverages to acquire a retail shipping license and ship malt beverages to first- and second-class licensees.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/21/25)</p>

H 110	Rep. Lucy Boyden	<p>An Act Relating to A Reciprocity Requirement for Out-of-state Consumer Shipping Licenses</p> <p>This bill proposes to limit the issuance of out-of-state malt beverage consumer shipping licenses to breweries that are located in states that allow Vermont brewers to acquire consumer shipping licenses.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/28/25)</p>
H 119	Rep. Carolyn Branagan	<p>An Act Relating to The Beverage Container Redemption System</p> <p>This bill proposes to expand the scope of the beverage container redemption system to include cider, hard kombucha, noncarbonated water, and noncarbonated soft drinks. The bill also would increase the deposit for a container from five cents to 10 cents.</p>	<p>Committees: House Environment</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Environment (01/29/25)</p>
H 144	Rep. Brian Minier; Bridget Burkhardt; Rep. Emilie Krasnow; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Laura Sibilia; Rep. Leonora Dodge; Rep. Lisa Hango; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun	<p>An Act Relating to Enhancing Food Allergen Awareness in Food Service Establishments</p> <p>This bill proposes to require owners and operators of food service establishments to designate employees to complete a food allergen training program. It further proposes to require food service establishments to post signage regarding food allergens.</p>	<p>Committees: House Human Services</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/05/25)</p>
H 260	Rep. Esme Cole; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Ela Chapin; Herb Olson; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Kate McCann; Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Mary Howard; Robert "Rob" North; VL Coffin	<p>An Act Relating to Prohibiting Certain Substances in Food Manufactured, Sold, Or Distributed in Vermont</p> <p>This bill proposes to prohibit the manufacture, sale, delivery, or distribution in commerce of food containing brominated vegetable oil, potassium bromate, propylparaben, or red dye no. 3.</p>	<p>Committees: House Human Services</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/19/25)</p>
H 339	House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs	<p>An Act Relating to Removing the Repeal Of 7 V.s.a. § 230</p> <p>This bill proposes to remove the repeal of 7 V.S.A. § 230 (sale of alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption).</p>	<p>Committees: Senate Economic Development Housing and General Affairs Committee</p> <p>Status: As Passed the House</p>

H 376	Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Brian Cina; Rep. Carol Ode; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Mari Cordes; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Phil Pouech; Rep. Troy Headrick	<p>An Act Relating to The Creation Of The Treatment And Recovery Fund And The Labeling And Taxation of Alcoholic Beverages</p> <p>This bill proposes to (1) require all alcoholic beverages sold in the State to bear a label containing a statement of the alcohol content in U.S. Standard Drinks; (2) increase the gallonage taxes on malt beverages and vinous beverages; (3) increase the excise tax on spirits; (4) create the Treatment and Recovery Fund, dedicate the proceeds of the gallonage tax to the Fund, and establish the purposes for which monies from the Fund may be disbursed; and (5) require the Division of Liquor Control t...</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (02/26/25)</p>
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S.131	Sen. Phil Baruth	<p>An act relating to approval of an amendment to the charter of the City of Burlington relating to the possession of firearms</p> <p>This bill proposes to approve an amendment to the charter of the City of Burlington to prohibit the possession of firearms in any building or on any real property or parking area under the ownership or control of an establishment licensed to serve alcohol for on- premises consumption.</p>	<p>Committee: Government Operations</p> <p>Status: Read the 1st time and referred to Committee on Government Operations (03/20/25)</p>

VBA Legislative Update – Week 11 March 29, 2025

→ House Passes FY 26 Appropriations Bill

On Friday morning, with tri-partisan support, the House gave final approval to H.493, the FY 26 Appropriations bill. The House passed budget addresses many of the ongoing challenges Vermont faces, including the end of COVID-related federal funding. All statutorily-required reserves are filled, all pension obligations are met, and essential investments in housing, workforce, economic development, human services, and education are made. To develop this budget, the House Committee on Appropriations worked with administration officials, standing committees and many interested stakeholders, including members of the public and legislators. General Fund appropriations total \$2.4 billion. Total appropriations from all funds are \$9.0 billion.

Base Appropriations Include:

- Fully funds the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) at statutory level of \$36.9 million
- Provides \$2.0 million to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for the Manufactured Home Improvement and Repair Program (MHIR)
- Adds \$1.6 million to the base budget for the Land Access Opportunity Board
- Provides \$29.7 million for the Housing Opportunity Grant Program (HOP) that assists homeless Vermonters
- Provides a 4.5% rate increase for infant and toddler care in the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) in the Department for Children and Families – Child Development Division (DCF – CDD)
- Provides reimbursement rate increase for Designated Agencies, Specialized Service Agencies, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), Home and Community Based Services and nursing homes
- Adds \$360,000 General Fund for alternatives to Emergency Room beds
- Provides a 3% increase to the University of Vermont (UVM), Vermont State Colleges (VSC), and the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC)

One-Time General Fund Appropriations Include:

- \$235,000 to the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) for the HomeShare Program
- \$4.4 million to AHS for Support and Services at Home (SASH) and Blueprint for Health programs
- \$840,000 to the Department of Vermont Health Access (DVHA) for Comprehensive Payment Reform
- \$3.1 million to DVHA for OneCare Primary Care Transition
- \$40,000 to the Department of Health (VDH) for Empty Arms Vermont
- \$300,000 to VDH for Recovery Residences

- \$30.5 million for Emergency Housing
- \$2.0 million in DCF's Office of Economic Opportunity for shelter bed expansion
- \$5.0 million for VHCB housing initiatives
- \$4.1 million for VHIP funding and one position
- \$10.0 million for the Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA) Middle-Income Homeownership Development Program
- \$7.5 million for the VHFA Rental Revolving Loan Fund
- \$5.0 million to VSC for transformation bridge funding
- \$500,000 for the Community College of Vermont (CCV) Tuition Advantage Program
- \$1.5 million to VSAC for Freedom and Unity grants

The bill now heads to the Senate for review.

→ **Will Vermont be Able to Back-fill Federal Budget Cuts?**

The House budget was not built to respond to the increasing likelihood of massive negative revenue impacts from cuts to federal funding. If adjustments or rescissions need to be made after the legislature adjourns, [there is a chance that lawmakers would have to return for a special session](#) to adjust the budget.

Vermont lawmakers are keenly aware that [potential federal budget cuts](#) could significantly impact the state's human service programs. Lawmakers also understand that the state has an affordability crisis and are working hard to avoid any tax increases. However, if federal cuts threaten essential services, a temporary income tax surcharge, reminiscent of the 1991 "Snelling surcharge," is on the minds of lawmakers as a possible necessary step to maintain the social safety net and prevent increased homelessness.

The so-called Snelling surcharge, which raised about \$80 million in 1991, used a temporary tiered income tax surcharge that resulted in Vermont's highest earners paying the most in additional taxes. Although no formal estimates have yet been run, many believe that a similar surcharge on, for example, those with incomes over \$500,000, could raise well over \$200 million. These are the same taxpayers that will be benefitting from federal income (and other) tax cuts.

The Trump administration's actions have already jeopardized approximately \$378 million in federal funding designated for Vermont's broadband, solar, weatherization, and other programs. Vermont's federal delegation is warning that the upcoming budget reconciliation could lead to even more severe cuts, particularly to Medicaid – with cuts up to \$1 billion, which would profoundly affect Vermont.

Federal budget decisions directly influence state fiscal planning. Lawmakers will need to respond. With few tools in the tool box, a temporary, progressive state income tax surcharge could mitigate the financial impact on Vermont and address widening income inequality resulting from deepening federal tax cuts favoring the very wealthy. Stay tuned...

→ **Local Headlines of Note**

- [House and Senate education reform plans diverge as Gov. Phil Scott demands swift action](#)
- [UVM Health Network agrees to tentative settlement with Green Mountain Care Board](#)
- [Final Reading: A US-Canada trade war could pose an existential threat to Vermont's forest economy](#)
- [5 years ago, Covid-19 shuttered the Vermont Statehouse. Then, it opened up the building in new ways.](#)
- [Ways and Means: Experts Say Vermont Legislature's Ethics Disclosures Are Lacking](#)
- [Education Secretary Zoie Saunders Doesn't Seek the Spotlight — but Can't Escape It](#)
- [As standoff over motel program continues, residents grapple with uncertainty](#)

→ **[Proposed Changes to Bottle Redemption System.](#)**

The House Environment committee is considering a bill that would make some major changes to the bottle redemption system. Initially at least, the bill **does not** propose to increase the deposit (remains at \$.05) or to expand application of the law to other beverages.

Under current law, beverages that are subject to the 5-cent container deposit include: beer, wine coolers, other malt beverages, pre-mixed spirits cocktails; carbonated non-alcoholic beverages, including sodas, sparkling waters and juices, and carbonated sports and energy drinks. Liquor containers over 50mL are also subject to a deposit at a rate of 15 cents per container. Unclaimed liquor bottle deposits are retained by the Department of Liquor and Lottery. As of October 1, 2019, all other unclaimed beverage deposits are remitted to the State and deposited in the Clean Water Fund.

[The bill](#) proposes numerous changes to Vermont's beverage container redemption system. Most notably, it restructures the redemption system by requiring beverage container manufacturers and distributors to participate in a newly formed producer responsibility organization (PRO). The PRO would be responsible for creating and implementing a stewardship plan that would manage the beverage container redemption system going forward. The Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) would oversee the organization and verify stewardship plan adherence. Notable provisions in the bill are listed below, in order of effective date:

- On or before January 1, 2026, ANR will accept applications to form a producer responsibility organization. ANR would have authority to compel the creation of a producer responsibility organization or stewardship plan if one isn't created or submitted by that date. ANR would also have authority to bill back oversight costs to the producer responsibility organization.
- On or before October 1, 2026, an approved producer responsibility organization may submit a stewardship plan to ANR for review and approval. Approval would be granted for a five-year period. A stewardship plan shall, at a minimum, meet all of the following requirements (detailed in the law):
 - Convenience of collection. A plan shall ensure that consumers have convenient opportunities to redeem beverage containers.

- o Fair operation and compensation to redemption centers.
- o Education to consumers.
- o Consultation with stakeholders.
- o Reporting
- Beginning on January 15, 2025 and annually thereafter, the Commissioner of Liquor and Lottery shall report to the Secretary of Natural Resources: (1) the amount and tonnage of liquor bottles that the Department of Liquor and Lottery collected in the previous calendar year; and (2) the redemption rate for liquor bottles in the previous calendar year.
- Each beverage container sold or offered for sale in the State that is required to have a deposit shall include a Universal Product Code and barcode. Each distributor shall provide the Universal Product Code and barcode as part of its beverage registration or within 60 days following March 1, 2025, whichever occurs first.
- Beginning on March 1, 2028 and annually thereafter, the producer responsibility organization shall conduct an independent third-party fiscal audit of the program. The fiscal audit shall provide a transparent fiscal analysis of the producer responsibility organization, its expenditures, the number of beverage containers collected, and the amount of unclaimed deposits. The audit shall also provide the redemption rate of beverage containers redeemed in the State. The Secretary shall approve the audit results and the redemption rate of beverage containers included in the audit.

We will discuss this further at our next GAC meeting, Friday, April 4.

→ **Other Updates:**

- Aside from [H.339](#), which makes permanent in law the authority to sell To-Go drinks when accompanied by a food order, we are not expecting any action on alcohol-related legislation this year. H.339 is now in the Senate Economic Development Committee. We do not expect consideration of this bill for a few weeks.
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		the deposit for a container from five cents to 10 cents.	
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H 376	Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Brian Cina; Rep. Carol Ode; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Mari Cordes; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Phil Pouech; Rep. Troy Headrick	An Act Relating to The Creation Of The Treatment And Recovery Fund And The Labeling And Taxation of Alcoholic Beverages This bill proposes to (1) require all alcoholic beverages sold in the State to bear a label containing a statement of the alcohol content in U.S. Standard Drinks; (2) increase the gallonage taxes on malt beverages and vinous beverages; (3) increase the excise tax on spirits; (4) create the Treatment and Recovery Fund, dedicate the proceeds of the gallonage tax to the Fund, and establish the purposes for which monies from the Fund may be disbursed; and (5) require the Division of Liquor Control t...	Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (02/26/25)

H 377	Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Rep. Chea Waters Evans	An Act Relating to The Local Media Advertising Tax Credit This bill proposes to create an income tax credit for small businesses that purchase advertising in local media outlets.	Committees: House Ways and Means Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Ways and Means (02/26/25)
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VBA Legislative Update – Week 12 April 5, 2025

→ **House Education Transformation Bill Moves Closer to Passage**

The House Committee on Ways and Means spent the week plugging away at the Education Transformation package with the aim of voting the legislation out by the end of the day Friday. While they didn't quite make that deadline, they have decided on the bill's funding system elements and the committee is prepared to vote the 120+ page bill first thing next week. You can read the most recent version of the bill [here](#).

The major tax elements of the bill are:

- **A foundation formula.** Districts will be granted a foundational payment called an Educational Opportunity Payment (EOP) per each weighted student. Districts will be allowed to vote to spend up to 10% above that grant in what is called Supplemental District Spending.
- **Homestead Exemption.** The Committee decided to transition from a property tax credit to a homestead exemption. The homestead exemption allows a homeowner to exempt part of their property tax burden based on a sliding scale depending on their income. This change is intended to improve transparency and reduces complexity. The limit for assistance caps out at \$115,000 of household income.
- **Property Tax Rate Classifications.** The Committee decided to create three new classifications of non-homestead property, for a total of four tax rates. The new classifications for tax rates are homestead and non-homestead, which would now include three sub-classifications: apartment, residential, and non-residential.

The major governance elements of the bill are (developed by the House Education Committee and House Commerce Committee) are:

- **Districts.** The bill tasks a new subcommittee comprised of five appointed, retired superintendents to draft potential district maps with no fewer than 4,000 students per district.
- **Scale –** The bill sets a 12-student minimum class size for Pre-K, 15 for grades 1-4, and 18 for grades 5-12 - effective 2026. For comparison, our current average class size is just over 10 across all grade levels.
- **Career Technical Education.** The House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development [has recommended](#) moving to a single statewide CTE district and aligning CTE governance with newly drawn K–12 school districts. The CTE changes are not in the current draft of the bill.

We will provide a more complete summary of the House proposal next week. We expect the full House to debate the Education Transformation Bill on Thursday and Friday next week. It then moves to the Senate for consideration.

→ **Local Headlines of Note**

- [Vermont Supreme Court's chief justice, attorneys speak out against threats to rule of law](#)
 - [Federal government slashes staffers at critical heating program for Vermont](#)
 - [What do Trump's 'reciprocal tariffs' mean for Vermont?](#)
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→ **Proposed Changes to Bottle Redemption System.**

Last week we reported that the House Environment committee is considering a bill that would make some major changes to the bottle redemption system. The committee continued to take testimony on the proposal last week and we expect they will continue in the week ahead. **If the House moves forward with this proposal, the Senate will likely wait until next year to consider it.**

Under current law, beverages that are subject to the 5-cent container deposit include: beer, wine coolers, other malt beverages, pre-mixed spirits cocktails; carbonated non-alcoholic beverages, including sodas, sparkling waters and juices, and carbonated sports and energy drinks. Liquor containers over 50mL are also subject to a deposit at a rate of 15 cents per container. Unclaimed liquor bottle deposits are retained by the Department of Liquor and Lottery. As of October 1, 2019, all other unclaimed beverage deposits have been remitted to the State and deposited in the Clean Water Fund.

[The bill](#) proposes numerous changes to Vermont's beverage container redemption system. Most notably, it restructures the redemption system by **requiring beverage container manufacturers and distributors to participate in a newly formed producer responsibility organization (PRO)**. The PRO would be responsible for creating and implementing a stewardship plan that would manage the beverage container redemption system going forward. The Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) would oversee the organization and verify stewardship plan adherence. **Initially at least, the bill does not propose to increase the deposit (remains at \$.05) or to expand application of the law to other beverages.** Notable provisions in the bill are listed below, in order of effective date:

- On or before January 1, 2026, ANR will accept applications to form a producer responsibility organization. ANR would have authority to compel the creation of a producer responsibility organization or stewardship plan if one isn't created or submitted by that date. ANR would also have authority to bill back oversight costs to the producer responsibility organization.
 - The Sec may approve a PRO for not more than 10 years
 - The PRO shall maintain a website that identifies its participants and all the containers covered in the stewardship plan

- o The PRO shall not exclude by unreasonable barriers the small manufacturers
- o Manufacturers and distributors of liquor are exempt from the requirements of this section and the requirement to implement a stewardship plan under section 1532 of this title (page 11)
- o The PRO is subject to review by the Secretary and the Secretary may obligate them to enhance their program to meet goals
- On or before October 1, 2026, an approved producer responsibility organization may submit a stewardship plan to ANR for review and approval. Approval would be granted for a five-year period. A stewardship plan shall, at a minimum, meet all of the following requirements (detailed in the law):
 - o Convenience of collection. A plan shall ensure that consumers have convenient opportunities to redeem beverage containers: 3 points of redemption per county and 1 per municipality of 7,000 people or greater
 - o Fair operation and compensation to redemption centers.
 - Plan will detail how to minimize management and sorting
 - Plan will maximize the use of existing infrastructure
 - o Education to consumers.
 - o Consultation with stakeholders.
 - o Reporting: amount of containers redeemed and redemption rates, carbon impacts associated, ongoing improvements and efforts to reduce environmental impacts, among other things.
- Beginning on January 15, 2026 and annually thereafter, the Commissioner of Liquor and Lottery shall report to the Secretary of Natural Resources: (1) the amount and tonnage of liquor bottles that the Department of Liquor and Lottery collected in the previous calendar year; and (2) the redemption rate for liquor bottles in the previous calendar year.
- A manufacturer or distributor collecting beverage containers must report recycling information to the Secretary of Natural Resources, including the amount in containers and tons and material type of beverage container collected and location
- Each beverage container sold or offered for sale in the State that is required to have a deposit must include a Universal Product Code and barcode. Each distributor shall provide the Universal Product Code and barcode as part of its beverage registration or within 60 days following March 1, 2027, whichever occurs first.
 - o Beverage containers must be labeled with refund value and Universal Product Code by March 1, 2027.
 - o It no longer has to be imprinted on the tops/lids of metal containers as long as its clear somewhere else
- Beginning on March 1, 2032 and every five years thereafter, the producer responsibility organization shall conduct an independent third-party fiscal audit of the program. The fiscal audit shall provide a transparent fiscal analysis of the producer responsibility organization, its expenditures, the number of beverage containers collected, and the amount of unclaimed deposits. The audit shall also provide the redemption rate of beverage containers redeemed in the State. The Secretary shall approve the audit results and the redemption rate of beverage containers included in the audit.

- The bill also sets redemption rate goals, aiming for 75% by 2028 and increasing incrementally to 90% by 2042.
- Retailers and distributors/manufacturers with retail locations that are under 5,000 square feet may refuse to redeem beverage containers. Otherwise, they are only allowed to refuse containers if they are broken or contaminated.

Some Outstanding Questions

- The biggest unknown in the current proposal is – how much will the new system cost, and who will pay? Some argue that instead of depositing the unclaimed deposits into the Clean Water Fund, that money should be reinvested in the system to improve infrastructure and systems.
- Will there be a handling fee in the new system, or will that expense be part of the PRO?
- What questions do you have?

Read more about Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) laws:

- [Expended Producer Responsibility: A Primer](#)
- [How bottle bill, EPR programs work together](#)
- [Oregon becomes second state to pass packaging EPR law](#)
- [Navigating the EPR Laws: What Alcohol Beverage Producers Need to Know](#)

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- [Vermont Supreme Court's chief justice, attorneys speak out against threats to rule of law](#)
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→ VBA Bill Report

VBA BILL REPORT – WEEK 12 April 6, 2025			
Bill	Sponsors	Description	Status
H 24	Rep. Anne Donahue	An Act Relating to Requiring Retail Businesses to Accept Cash This bill proposes to prohibit a retail business from refusing to accept cash payment.	Committees: House Commerce and Economic Development Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development (01/09/25)

H 45	Rep. Mary-Katherine Stone; Rep. Tiffany Bluemle; Rep. Abbey Duke; Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Bram Kleppner; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Robert Hooper; Rep. Troy Headrick	<p>An Act Relating to Prohibiting Possession of Firearms on Premises Where Alcohol Is Licensed To Be Served</p> <p>This bill proposes to prohibit possession of firearms on premises where alcohol is licensed to be served and to require that notice of the prohibition be posted at each premises.</p>	<p>Committees: House Judiciary</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary (01/21/25)</p>
H 51	Rep. Lucy Boyden; Rep. Matthew Birong	<p>An Act Relating to Miscellaneous Amendments to The Statutes Governing Alcoholic Beverages</p> <p>This bill proposes to: (1) authorize the holder of a fourth-class license to sell its products to not more than eight additional manufacturers or rectifiers; and (2) authorize manufacturers of malt beverages to acquire a retail shipping license and ship malt beverages to first- and second-class licensees.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/21/25)</p>
H 110	Rep. Lucy Boyden	<p>An Act Relating to A Reciprocity Requirement for Out-of-state Consumer Shipping Licenses</p> <p>This bill proposes to limit the issuance of out-of-state malt beverage consumer shipping licenses to breweries that are located in states that allow Vermont brewers to acquire consumer shipping licenses.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/28/25)</p>
H 119	Rep. Carolyn Branagan	<p>An Act Relating to The Beverage Container Redemption System</p> <p>This bill proposes to expand the scope of the beverage container redemption system to include cider, hard kombucha, noncarbonated water, and noncarbonated soft drinks. The bill also would increase the deposit for a container from five cents to 10 cents.</p>	<p>Committees: House Environment</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Environment (01/29/25)</p>

H 144	Rep. Brian Minier; Bridget Burkhardt; Rep. Emilie Krasnow; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Laura Sibilia; Rep. Leonora Dodge; Rep. Lisa Hango; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun	<p>An Act Relating to Enhancing Food Allergen Awareness in Food Service Establishments</p> <p>This bill proposes to require owners and operators of food service establishments to designate employees to complete a food allergen training program. It further proposes to require food service establishments to post signage regarding food allergens.</p>	<p>Committees: House Human Services</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/05/25)</p>
H 260	Rep. Esme Cole; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Ela Chapin; Herb Olson; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Kate McCann; Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Mary Howard; Robert "Rob" North; VL Coffin	<p>An Act Relating to Prohibiting Certain Substances in Food Manufactured, Sold, Or Distributed in Vermont</p> <p>This bill proposes to prohibit the manufacture, sale, delivery, or distribution in commerce of food containing brominated vegetable oil, potassium bromate, propylparaben, or red dye no. 3.</p>	<p>Committees: House Human Services</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/19/25)</p>
H 339	House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs	<p>An Act Relating to Removing the Repeal Of 7 V.s.a. § 230</p> <p>This bill proposes to remove the repeal of 7 V.S.A. § 230 (sale of alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption).</p>	<p>Committees: Senate Economic Development Housing and General Affairs Committee</p> <p>Status: As Passed the House</p>
H 376	Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Brian Cina; Rep. Carol Ode; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Mari Cordes; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Phil Pouech; Rep. Troy Headrick	<p>An Act Relating to The Creation Of The Treatment And Recovery Fund And The Labeling And Taxation of Alcoholic Beverages</p> <p>This bill proposes to (1) require all alcoholic beverages sold in the State to bear a label containing a statement of the alcohol content in U.S. Standard Drinks; (2) increase the gallonage taxes on malt beverages and vinous beverages; (3) increase the excise tax on spirits; (4) create the Treatment and Recovery Fund, dedicate the proceeds of the gallonage tax to the Fund, and establish the purposes for which monies from the Fund may be disbursed; and (5) require the Division of Liquor Control t...</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (02/26/25)</p>

H 377	Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Rep. Chea Waters Evans	An Act Relating to The Local Media Advertising Tax Credit This bill proposes to create an income tax credit for small businesses that purchase advertising in local media outlets.	Committees: House Ways and Means Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Ways and Means (02/26/25)
S 88	Sen. Wendy Harrison; Sen. Alison Clarkson; Sen. Anne Watson; Joseph "Joe" Major; Sen. Randolph Brock; Sen. Rebecca White; Robert "Rob" Plunkett	An Act Relating to Creating an Enhanced Growth Incentive For Employee-owned Businesses This bill proposes to create a new enhanced incentive for locally owned and controlled employee-owned businesses within the Vermont Employment Growth Incentive Program (VEGI).	Committees: Senate Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs Status: Read 1st time & referred to Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs (02/25/25)
S.131	Sen. Phil Baruth	An act relating to approval of an amendment to the charter of the City of Burlington relating to the possession of firearms This bill proposes to approve an amendment to the charter of the City of Burlington to prohibit the possession of firearms in any building or on any real property or parking area under the ownership or control of an establishment licensed to serve alcohol for on- premises consumption.	Committee: Government Operations Status: Read the 1 st time and referred to Committee on Government Operations (03/20/25)

VBA Legislative Update – Week 13 April 12, 2025

→ **House Passes Major Education Transformation Package**

On Friday afternoon, on a tri-partisan [vote of 87-55](#), the House passed H.454 An act relating to transforming Vermont's education governance, quality, and finance systems. The bill takes a slower, more measured approach to reforming school funding and governance than Gov. Phil Scott's education transformation plan, but it includes several ideas from the governor's proposal, including fewer school districts, class-size minimums, universal graduation requirements for high school students and a shift to a foundation formula to fund education. A timeline for the bill is [here](#).

Highlights of the bill include:

◆ **New School Districts Design.** The bill tasks a new subcommittee comprised of five appointed, retired superintendents and four lawmakers to draft potential district maps with no fewer than 4,000 students per district. The subcommittee would meet this summer and fall and present three proposals for new school district boundaries to the legislature by December 1.

The bill directs the subcommittee to consider "educational research, Vermont's geographic and cultural landscape, historic school attendance patterns, and a comprehensive analysis of school locations, conditions, and capacity" as they propose district boundaries. The legislature would finalize district boundaries during its 2026 session. The following year the legislature would create voting wards with each school district for the election of school board members. The first elections for the new districts would occur in 2028.

◆ **Class Size Minimums.** The bill also would set class-size minimums. In kindergarten, the average class size minimum would be 12; for grades 1 to 4, it would be 15; and in grades 5 to 12, it would be 18. Some classes would be exempt from the minimums, including career and technical education, Advanced Placement courses, English Language Learners instruction, and special-education classes. To receive public funds, independent schools would have to abide by the class-size minimums. Schools would be able to apply for a waiver from the State Board of Education if they can't comply with the prescribed class-size minimums.

◆ **School Size.** The bill includes intent language that schools operating grades 6-12, or any subset of those grades, would be required to have a minimum enrollment of 450 students. For context, 2023 enrollment data provided from AOE shows Vermont has approximately 180 public schools that wouldn't meet the minimum.

◆ **School Construction.** The bill would revise the State Aid for School Construction Program by adopting a debt service subsidy model, where the State would provide grants of 20% to 40% of a school's annual debt service amortization payments (principal plus interest) for

eligible construction expenses. This would shift a portion of the costs associated with school construction financing out of local school budgets.

◆ **Private Schools.** To be eligible for tax-payer funded tuition, a private school in Vermont would have to meet a number of qualifications, including:

- At least 51% of its student enrollment must be composed of students attending on a district-funded tuition basis during the 2024/2025 school year and complies with the minimum class size requirements;
- The school must have the ability to provide special education services to all enrolled students to the same extent as would be required of a public school operated by a school district
- The school must meet education quality standards;
- Or, the school must be therapeutic approved independent school located in Vermont or another state or country and is approved under the laws of that state or country.

Per-pupil tuition paid to eligible private schools would be equal to the base amount multiplied by the weighted pupil count attending the school.

◆ **Special Education.** The bill requires AOE to develop a three-year strategic plan on Special Education in consultation with the State Advisory Panel on Special Education. The strategic plan would include unambiguous measurable outcomes, a timeline for implementation, and be designed to ensure successful implementation of Act 173 (2018). The plan must also outline the supports and processes necessary for the transition to a weighted funding formula for Special Education to succeed, including a suggested transition timeline and benchmarks for success.

◆ **Funding.** The major tax elements of the bill are:

- **A foundation formula.** Districts will be granted a foundational payment of \$15,033 per student called an Educational Opportunity Payment (EOP) per each weighted student. Weights would apply to students living in poverty, those who qualify for special education and English Language Learners. Eligible districts would also receive “sparse school district grants” reflecting the enrollment of public schools in the district, and “small school grants” for schools that are “small by necessity.” Districts will be allowed to vote to spend up to 10% above that grant in what is called Supplemental District Spending.
- **Homestead Exemption.** The bill would transition from a property tax credit to a homestead exemption. The homestead exemption allows a homeowner to exempt part of their property tax burden based on a sliding scale depending on their income. This change is intended to improve transparency and reduces complexity. The limit for assistance caps out at \$115,000 of household income.
- **Property Tax Rate Classifications.** The bill creates three new classifications of non-homestead property, for a total of four tax rates. The new classifications for tax rates are homestead and non-homestead, which would now include three sub-classifications: apartment, residential, and non-residential. Business property would be classified and taxed as non-homestead, non-residential.

The bill will now go to the Senate for consideration. The Governor has signaled that, while the House proposal is not everything he wants, he thinks it is a good start and is hopeful that the end result will be something he will be able to sign. Stay tuned...

→ [Proposed Changes to Bottle Redemption System.](#)

Last week we reported that the House Environment committee is considering a bill that would transition the current bottle redemption system to a producer responsibility program model. See last week’s Update for details. The committee did not take further testimony on the proposal last week but we expect they will continue in the week ahead. **If the House moves forward with this proposal, the Senate will likely wait until next year to consider it.** Stay tuned...

Read more about Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) laws:

- [Expended Producer Responsibility: A Primer](#)
- [How bottle bill, EPR programs work together](#)
- [Oregon becomes second state to pass packaging EPR law](#)
- [Navigating the EPR Laws: What Alcohol Beverage Producers Need to Know](#)

→ **Local Headlines of Note**

- [Whiplash: Vermont Businesses Decry On-Again, Off-Again Tariffs](#)
- [Vermont's Junior Senator Talks Tariffs, Taxes and Trump](#)
- [Vermont Education Agency Outlines Response to Trump's Anti-DEI Directive](#)
- [Trump executive order targets Vermont’s first-in-the-nation ‘climate superfund’](#)
- [Lawmakers look to expand unpaid time off](#)
- [Final Reading: House advances changes to its ethics panel’s procedures spurred by bag-soaking scandal](#)
- [Nicaraguan students at Vt. high school facing deportation](#)

→ **VBA Bill Report**

VBA BILL REPORT – WEEK 13 April 12, 2025			
Bill	Sponsors	Description	Status
H 24	Rep. Anne Donahue	An Act Relating to Requiring Retail Businesses to Accept Cash This bill proposes to prohibit a retail business from refusing to accept cash payment.	Committees: House Commerce and Economic Development Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development (01/09/25)

H 45	Rep. Mary-Katherine Stone; Rep. Tiffany Bluemle; Rep. Abbey Duke; Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Bram Kleppner; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Robert Hooper; Rep. Troy Headrick	<p>An Act Relating to Prohibiting Possession of Firearms on Premises Where Alcohol Is Licensed To Be Served</p> <p>This bill proposes to prohibit possession of firearms on premises where alcohol is licensed to be served and to require that notice of the prohibition be posted at each premises.</p>	<p>Committees: House Judiciary</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary (01/21/25)</p>
H 51	Rep. Lucy Boyden; Rep. Matthew Birong	<p>An Act Relating to Miscellaneous Amendments to The Statutes Governing Alcoholic Beverages</p> <p>This bill proposes to: (1) authorize the holder of a fourth-class license to sell its products to not more than eight additional manufacturers or rectifiers; and (2) authorize manufacturers of malt beverages to acquire a retail shipping license and ship malt beverages to first- and second-class licensees.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/21/25)</p>
H 110	Rep. Lucy Boyden	<p>An Act Relating to A Reciprocity Requirement for Out-of-state Consumer Shipping Licenses</p> <p>This bill proposes to limit the issuance of out-of-state malt beverage consumer shipping licenses to breweries that are located in states that allow Vermont brewers to acquire consumer shipping licenses.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/28/25)</p>
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H 144	Rep. Brian Minier; Bridget Burkhardt; Rep. Emilie Krasnow; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Laura Sibilia; Rep. Leonora Dodge; Rep. Lisa Hango; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun	<p>An Act Relating to Enhancing Food Allergen Awareness in Food Service Establishments</p> <p>This bill proposes to require owners and operators of food service establishments to designate employees to complete a food allergen training program. It further proposes to require food service establishments to post signage regarding food allergens.</p>	<p>Committees: House Human Services</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/05/25)</p>
H 260	Rep. Esme Cole; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Ela Chapin; Herb Olson; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Kate McCann; Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Mary Howard; Robert "Rob" North; VL Coffin	<p>An Act Relating to Prohibiting Certain Substances in Food Manufactured, Sold, Or Distributed in Vermont</p> <p>This bill proposes to prohibit the manufacture, sale, delivery, or distribution in commerce of food containing brominated vegetable oil, potassium bromate, propylparaben, or red dye no. 3.</p>	<p>Committees: House Human Services</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/19/25)</p>
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H 376	Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Brian Cina; Rep. Carol Ode; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Mari Cordes; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Phil Pouech; Rep. Troy Headrick	<p>An Act Relating to The Creation Of The Treatment And Recovery Fund And The Labeling And Taxation of Alcoholic Beverages</p> <p>This bill proposes to (1) require all alcoholic beverages sold in the State to bear a label containing a statement of the alcohol content in U.S. Standard Drinks; (2) increase the gallonage taxes on malt beverages and vinous beverages; (3) increase the excise tax on spirits; (4) create the Treatment and Recovery Fund, dedicate the proceeds of the gallonage tax to the Fund, and establish the purposes for which monies from the Fund may be disbursed; and (5) require the Division of Liquor Control t...</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (02/26/25)</p>

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VBA Legislative Update – Week 14 April 19, 2025

→ **Adjournment – When Will it End?**

This is the time of year when lawmakers and lobbyists are all wondering – when will this end? The legislature generally budgets for an 18-week session, which this year would take us to May 16th. Unfortunately, between education transformation efforts and the chaos in Washington, D.C., an on-schedule adjournment seems unlikely. We are betting on ending before May 31 this year.

This week the Senate received and began reviewing the education transformation bill passed by the House. Senate leaders believe they have much work ahead to reconcile the differences between the House and direction the Senate wants to take – which is likely to be a bit more aligned with what the Governor wants.

At the same time, the Senate Appropriations Committee is close to finalizing their version of the FY26 budget – which will then need to be reconciled with the House passed budget before going to the Governor. All budget conversations are cloudy by the daily news of new and more drastic plans to cut Federal spending – cuts that are certain to hurt Vermonters. It's unclear when we will know for sure the answers to the Federal spending rumors.

A veto session is already scheduled for June 16th and 17th.

→ **Introductory Hearing to be Held on Bill to Dramatically Increase Alcohol Taxes**

On Tuesday, April 22, [House Government Operations Committee](#) will hold an introductory hearing on [H. 376 - An act relating to the creation of the Treatment and Recovery Fund and the labeling and taxation of alcoholic beverages](#). As previously reported, H.376 proposes to increase the gallonage tax on malt beverages – from \$.265 per gallon to \$1.36 per gallon regardless of ABV – a 500% increase!!

The purpose of bill, [H.376](#), is to raise money to “offset the continuing costs of support services” for “mental health treatment and recovery” related to alcohol consumption. The bill would also require all alcohol beverages sold in Vermont to include a label that states the alcohol content of the beverage in U.S. Standard Drinks as well as a warning label that states: “WARNING: Drinking alcoholic beverages may increase cancer risk and, if consumed during pregnancy, can cause birth defects.”

Committee Chair, [Rep. Matt Birong](#) (D-Vergennes) assures us that the introductory hearing is just that – an introduction - and a courtesy to committee member and lead sponsor of the bill, [Rep. Kate Nugent](#) (D-South Burlington). Chair Birong does not intend to take further action on the bill this year. And, even if the bill were to gain traction, it is highly unlikely that the Governor would support this kind of tax increase. That said, an introductory hearing offers an opportunity

to engage with the bill’s sponsors and other lawmakers to communicate craft brewers’ concerns with such a dramatic tax increase proposal. **Please consider contacting [members of the committee](#) or [your local representative](#) to relay your concerns with this proposal.** Please keep Emma and me in the loop regarding any communications with lawmakers. This isn’t an emergency call to action, but it is an opportunity to engage.

→ **Local Headlines of Note**

- [Plan would overhaul Vermont’s response to homelessness, dissolving statewide motel program](#)
- [Education Secretary to Feds: Vermont Will Continue 'DEI' Practices](#)
- [Sweeping Education Reform Bill Advances in Vermont House](#)
- [Scott says lawmakers' push to undermine federal deportation policy could hurt detainees](#)
- [Amid federal and state funding questions, more Vermont municipalities are turning to local option taxes](#)
- [Final Reading: Vermont Senate looks to bolster protections for kids whose parents face immigration enforcement](#)

→ **VBA Bill Report**

VBA BILL REPORT – WEEK 14 April 19, 2025			
Bill	Sponsors	Description	Status
H 24	Rep. Anne Donahue	An Act Relating to Requiring Retail Businesses to Accept Cash This bill proposes to prohibit a retail business from refusing to accept cash payment.	Committees: House Commerce and Economic Development Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development (01/09/25)
H 45	Rep. Mary-Katherine Stone; Rep. Tiffany Bluemle; Rep. Abbey Duke; Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Bram Kleppner; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Robert Hooper; Rep. Troy Headrick	An Act Relating to Prohibiting Possession of Firearms on Premises Where Alcohol Is Licensed To Be Served This bill proposes to prohibit possession of firearms on premises where alcohol is licensed to be served and to require that notice of the prohibition be posted at each premises.	Committees: House Judiciary Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary (01/21/25)

H 51	Rep. Lucy Boyden; Rep. Matthew Birong	<p>An Act Relating to Miscellaneous Amendments to The Statutes Governing Alcoholic Beverages</p> <p>This bill proposes to: (1) authorize the holder of a fourth-class license to sell its products to not more than eight additional manufacturers or rectifiers; and (2) authorize manufacturers of malt beverages to acquire a retail shipping license and ship malt beverages to first- and second-class licensees.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/21/25)</p>
H 110	Rep. Lucy Boyden	<p>An Act Relating to A Reciprocity Requirement for Out-of-state Consumer Shipping Licenses</p> <p>This bill proposes to limit the issuance of out-of-state malt beverage consumer shipping licenses to breweries that are located in states that allow Vermont brewers to acquire consumer shipping licenses.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/28/25)</p>
H 119	Rep. Carolyn Branagan	<p>An Act Relating to The Beverage Container Redemption System</p> <p>This bill proposes to expand the scope of the beverage container redemption system to include cider, hard kombucha, noncarbonated water, and noncarbonated soft drinks. The bill also would increase the deposit for a container from five cents to 10 cents.</p>	<p>Committees: House Environment</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Environment (01/29/25)</p>
H 144	Rep. Brian Minier; Bridget Burkhardt; Rep. Emilie Krasnow; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Laura Sibilia; Rep. Leonora Dodge; Rep. Lisa Hango; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun	<p>An Act Relating to Enhancing Food Allergen Awareness in Food Service Establishments</p> <p>This bill proposes to require owners and operators of food service establishments to designate employees to complete a food allergen training program. It further proposes to require food service establishments to post signage regarding food allergens.</p>	<p>Committees: House Human Services</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/05/25)</p>

H 260	Rep. Esme Cole; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Ela Chapin; Herb Olson; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Kate McCann; Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Mary Howard; Robert "Rob" North; VL Coffin	An Act Relating to Prohibiting Certain Substances in Food Manufactured, Sold, Or Distributed in Vermont This bill proposes to prohibit the manufacture, sale, delivery, or distribution in commerce of food containing brominated vegetable oil, potassium bromate, propylparaben, or red dye no. 3.	Committees: House Human Services Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/19/25)
H 339	House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs	An Act Relating to Removing the Repeal Of 7 VSA § 230 This bill proposes to remove the repeal of 7 V.S.A. § 230 (sale of alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption).	Committees: Senate Economic Development Housing and General Affairs Committee Status: As Passed the House
H 376	Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Brian Cina; Rep. Carol Ode; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Mari Cordes; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Phil Pouech; Rep. Troy Headrick	An Act Relating to The Creation Of The Treatment And Recovery Fund And The Labeling And Taxation of Alcoholic Beverages This bill proposes to (1) require all alcoholic beverages sold in the State to bear a label containing a statement of the alcohol content in U.S. Standard Drinks; (2) increase the gallonage taxes on malt beverages and vinous beverages; (3) increase the excise tax on spirits; (4) create the Treatment and Recovery Fund, dedicate the proceeds of the gallonage tax to the Fund, and establish the purposes for which monies from the Fund may be disbursed; and (5) require the Division of Liquor Control t...	Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (02/26/25) Introductory hearing scheduled for 4/22.
H 377	Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Rep. Chea Waters Evans	An Act Relating to The Local Media Advertising Tax Credit This bill proposes to create an income tax credit for small businesses that purchase advertising in local media outlets.	Committees: House Ways and Means Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Ways and Means (02/26/25)
S 88	Sen. Wendy Harrison; Sen. Alison Clarkson; Sen. Anne Watson; Joseph "Joe" Major; Sen. Randolph Brock; Sen. Rebecca White; Robert "Rob" Plunkett	An Act Relating to Creating an Enhanced Growth Incentive For Employee-owned Businesses This bill proposes to create a new enhanced incentive for locally owned and controlled employee-owned businesses within	Committees: Senate Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs Status: Read 1st time & referred to Committee on Economic

		the Vermont Employment Growth Incentive Program (VEGI).	Development, Housing and General Affairs (02/25/25)
S.131	Sen. Phil Baruth	<p>An act relating to approval of an amendment to the charter of the City of Burlington relating to the possession of firearms</p> <p>This bill proposes to approve an amendment to the charter of the City of Burlington to prohibit the possession of firearms in any building or on any real property or parking area under the ownership or control of an establishment licensed to serve alcohol for on- premises consumption.</p>	<p>Committee: Government Operations</p> <p>Status: Senate Action Calendar</p> <p>As Recommended by Senate Government Operations</p>

VBA Legislative Update – Week 15 April 26, 2025

→ **Big moving pieces.**

◆ **Budget.** Last week the Senate Appropriations Committee voted out their version of the FY26 budget on a 7-0-0 vote. The full Senate will consider the bill next week. It will then head to a conference committee with the House to work out their differences. Passage of the budget usually signals the end of the session. However, this year, there are several other policy bills that are considered “must pass” before adjournment – the education transformation bill, a bill to evolve the motel program and the next phase of housing incentives.

◆ **Education Transformation.** H454 is now being considered by Senate Education Committee, after which it will be reviewed by Senate Finance Committee. Last week, the Senate Education committee rolled out an overhaul of the bill, reframing the bill’s intent to emphasize *incremental* transformation rather than immediate structural overhaul, which sets the tone for the committee’s work going forward. Significant changes to the bill include:

- **Governance & Consolidation:** The current Senate draft retains 2026 as the trigger date for forced consolidation planning and replaces the House’s “Redistricting Subcommittee”, which consists of five retired superintendents, with a new “School District Boundary Task Force” comprising legislators only.
 - If the Legislature doesn’t act by January 31, 2026, the Task Force must propose an alternative merger plan.
 - The draft also emphasizes that new district maps must ensure universal access to Career Technical Education.
- **Foundation Formula Adjustments:** Although the proposal is not drafted yet, the Senate seems to support a foundation formula that incorporates new modeling that will limit sparsity aid to the most rural districts by eliminating the mid-level sparsity tiers adopted by the House.
 - Additionally, **tiered** English Learner weights and special education weights in the House version will not be used in the Senate version due to what the Senators see as data constraints.
 - The Committee may instead opt for conducting regular reviews of weights, possibly every two years.
- **Class Size Minimums:** The current Senate draft **removes** mandatory average class size standards and the automatic Education Quality Standards noncompliance process.

◆ **Motel Program.** The House and Senate are working to resolve differences in a bill that would fundamentally overhaul Vermont’s response to homelessness and that could end the annual political wrangling with the Governor over the voucher program that have become a fixture since COVID.

H.91 would dissolve the motel voucher program as it currently exists as of July 2026. In its place would be a new initiative: the Vermont Homeless Emergency Assistance and

Responsive Transition to Housing program. Funding and decision-making power over the state's homelessness response would shift to Vermont's five regional community-action agencies.

These [non-profit](#) agencies, along with the [statewide organization](#) serving people fleeing domestic violence, would receive funding the state currently administers for building and running local shelters, and they would decide how to distribute it. The state would play an oversight role.

The bill's backers contend that a homelessness response system centered on the community level – rather than one that relies on the state as the central actor – will offer a better way to spend state money and serve unhoused people and those at risk of becoming homeless. The bill's critics argue that such a change would remove accountability from state government to care for Vermont's homeless population, eroding its current function as a backstop when shelters are full. For his part, the Governor has signaled he is open to the change.

→ **Introductory Hearing Held on Bill to Dramatically Increase Alcohol Taxes**

On Tuesday, April 22, [House Government Operations Committee](#) held an introductory hearing on [H. 376 - An act relating to the creation of the Treatment and Recovery Fund and the labeling and taxation of alcoholic beverages](#). H.376 proposes to increase the gallonage tax on malt beverages – from \$.265 per gallon to \$1.36 per gallon regardless of ABV – a 500% increase!!

The purpose of bill, [H.376](#), is to raise money to “offset the continuing costs of support services” for “mental health treatment and recovery” related to alcohol consumption. The bill would also require all alcohol beverages sold in Vermont to include a label that states the alcohol content of the beverage in U.S. Standard Drinks as well as a warning label that states: “WARNING: Drinking alcoholic beverages may increase cancer risk and, if consumed during pregnancy, can cause birth defects.”

At the hearing, the Sponsor of the bill, [Rep. Kate Nugent](#) (D-South Burlington) told the committee that estimates are the new taxes proposed in the bill would raise just over \$16m annually. She noted that this would amount to an average of about \$2.05 increase per drink. She believes that taxes are a way to reduce excessive use of alcohol. In turn, she believes that this would reduce the cost of healthcare. She reminded the committee that the last time the state raised the tax on alcohol was 1981.

The committee members had few questions. Legislative counsel did note that the proposed health warnings are likely prohibited as preempted by Federal law. He surmised that there may be some creative work arounds as may be the case in California.

Committee Chair, [Rep. Matt Birong](#) (D-Vergennes) continues to assure us that the introductory hearing was held as a courtesy to Nugent, who is a member of the committee member. Chair Birong does not intend to take further action on the bill this year. And, even if the bill were to gain traction, it is highly unlikely that the Governor would support this kind of tax increase. A fringe news site wrote [this story](#) critical of the bill.

→ **Local Headlines of Note**

- [Attorney General Clark sues Trump Administration to stop tariffs](#)
- [Legislature unanimously approves medical debt relief bill, S.27](#)
- [Boots on the Ground: Home Stretch](#)
- [Final Reading: Lawmakers press health care leaders on cost savings](#)
- [Some Lawmakers Want to Revamp How Real Estate Is Assessed as Part of Vermont's Education Funding Transformation](#)
- [FEMA ended a grant program designed to help communities prevent disaster damages. Here's where that leaves Vermont.](#)
- [Proposed infrastructure financing program would allow even small Vermont towns to incentivize housing](#)

→ **VBA Bill Report**

VBA BILL REPORT – WEEK 15 April 26, 2025			
Bill	Sponsors	Description	Status
H 24	Rep. Anne Donahue	An Act Relating to Requiring Retail Businesses to Accept Cash This bill proposes to prohibit a retail business from refusing to accept cash payment.	Committees: House Commerce and Economic Development Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development (01/09/25)
H 45	Rep. Mary-Katherine Stone; Rep. Tiffany Bluemle; Rep. Abbey Duke; Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Rep. Bram Kleppner; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Robert Hooper; Rep. Troy Headrick	An Act Relating to Prohibiting Possession of Firearms on Premises Where Alcohol Is Licensed To Be Served This bill proposes to prohibit possession of firearms on premises where alcohol is licensed to be served and to require that notice of the prohibition be posted at each premises.	Committees: House Judiciary Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary (01/21/25)
H 51	Rep. Lucy Boyden; Rep. Matthew Birong	An Act Relating to Miscellaneous Amendments to The Statutes Governing Alcoholic Beverages This bill proposes to: (1) authorize the holder of a fourth-class license to sell its products to not more than eight additional manufacturers or rectifiers; and (2) authorize manufacturers of malt beverages to acquire a retail shipping license and ship malt beverages to first- and second-class licensees.	Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/21/25)

H 110	Rep. Lucy Boyden	<p>An Act Relating to A Reciprocity Requirement for Out-of-state Consumer Shipping Licenses</p> <p>This bill proposes to limit the issuance of out-of-state malt beverage consumer shipping licenses to breweries that are located in states that allow Vermont brewers to acquire consumer shipping licenses.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/28/25)</p>
H 119	Rep. Carolyn Branagan	<p>An Act Relating to The Beverage Container Redemption System</p> <p>This bill proposes to expand the scope of the beverage container redemption system to include cider, hard kombucha, noncarbonated water, and noncarbonated soft drinks. The bill also would increase the deposit for a container from five cents to 10 cents.</p>	<p>Committees: House Environment</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Environment (01/29/25)</p>
H 144	Rep. Brian Minier; Bridget Burkhardt; Rep. Emilie Krasnow; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Laura Sibilia; Rep. Leonora Dodge; Rep. Lisa Hango; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun	<p>An Act Relating to Enhancing Food Allergen Awareness in Food Service Establishments</p> <p>This bill proposes to require owners and operators of food service establishments to designate employees to complete a food allergen training program. It further proposes to require food service establishments to post signage regarding food allergens.</p>	<p>Committees: House Human Services</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/05/25)</p>
H 260	Rep. Esme Cole; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Ela Chapin; Herb Olson; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Kate McCann; Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Mary Howard; Robert "Rob" North; VL Coffin	<p>An Act Relating to Prohibiting Certain Substances in Food Manufactured, Sold, Or Distributed in Vermont</p> <p>This bill proposes to prohibit the manufacture, sale, delivery, or distribution in commerce of food containing brominated vegetable oil, potassium bromate, propylparaben, or red dye no. 3.</p>	<p>Committees: House Human Services</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/19/25)</p>
H 339	House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs	<p>An Act Relating to Removing the Repeal Of 7 VSA § 230</p> <p>This bill proposes to remove the repeal of 7 V.S.A. § 230 (sale of alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption).</p>	<p>Committees: Senate Economic Development Housing and General Affairs Committee</p> <p>Status: As Passed the House Hearing scheduled for 4/30/25</p>

H 376	Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Brian Cina; Rep. Carol Ode; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Mari Cordes; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Phil Pouech; Rep. Troy Headrick	<p>An Act Relating to The Creation Of The Treatment And Recovery Fund And The Labeling And Taxation of Alcoholic Beverages</p> <p>This bill proposes to (1) require all alcoholic beverages sold in the State to bear a label containing a statement of the alcohol content in U.S. Standard Drinks; (2) increase the gallonage taxes on malt beverages and vinous beverages; (3) increase the excise tax on spirits; (4) create the Treatment and Recovery Fund, dedicate the proceeds of the gallonage tax to the Fund, and establish the purposes for which monies from the Fund may be disbursed; and (5) require the Division of Liquor Control t...</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (02/26/25)</p> <p>Introductory hearing scheduled for 4/22.</p>
H 377	Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Rep. Chea Waters Evans	<p>An Act Relating to The Local Media Advertising Tax Credit</p> <p>This bill proposes to create an income tax credit for small businesses that purchase advertising in local media outlets.</p>	<p>Committees: House Ways and Means</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Ways and Means (02/26/25)</p>
S 88	Sen. Wendy Harrison; Sen. Alison Clarkson; Sen. Anne Watson; Joseph "Joe" Major; Sen. Randolph Brock; Sen. Rebecca White; Robert "Rob" Plunkett	<p>An Act Relating to Creating an Enhanced Growth Incentive For Employee-owned Businesses</p> <p>This bill proposes to create a new enhanced incentive for locally owned and controlled employee-owned businesses within the Vermont Employment Growth Incentive Program (VEGI).</p>	<p>Committees: Senate Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read 1st time & referred to Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs (02/25/25)</p>
S.131	Sen. Phil Baruth	<p>An act relating to approval of an amendment to the charter of the City of Burlington relating to the possession of firearms</p> <p>This bill proposes to approve an amendment to the charter of the City of Burlington to prohibit the possession of firearms in any building or on any real property or parking area under the ownership or control of an establishment licensed to serve alcohol for on- premises consumption.</p>	<p>Committee: House Judiciary</p> <p>Status: Passed the Senate</p>

VBA Legislative Update – Week 16 April 26, 2025

→ **Senate Passes FY 26 Appropriations Bill.** Earlier this week, on a bi-partisan vote of 20-10, the Senate gave final approval to H.493, the FY 26 Appropriations bill. The Senate passed budget addresses many of the ongoing challenges Vermont faces, including the end of COVID-related federal funding. All statutorily-required reserves are filled, all pension obligations are met, and essential investments in housing, workforce, economic development, human services, and education are made. To develop this budget, the Senate Committee on Appropriations worked with administration officials, standing committees and many interested stakeholders, including members of the public and legislators. General Fund appropriations total \$2.479 billion. Total appropriations from all funds are \$9.1 billion.

Base Appropriations Include:

Housing

- Fully funds the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) at statutory level of \$36.9 million
- Provides \$2.0 million to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for the Manufactured Home Improvement and Repair Program (MHIR)
- Adds \$1.6 million to the base budget for the Land Access Opportunity Board
- Provides \$29.7 million for the Housing Opportunity Grant Program (HOP) that assists homeless individuals, increasing the base by \$3.35 million

Human Services

- Provides a 5.5% rate increase for infant and toddler care in the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) in the Department for Children and Families – Child Development Division (DCF – CDD)
- Maintains \$19 million in General Fund for Child Care Financial Assistant Program
- Adds \$150,000 for child care worker apprenticeship program stipends
- Provides \$5.1 million General Fund (\$12.1 million Global Commitment) for a 2% increase for Designated Agencies, Specialized Service Agencies, and other non-Home Health Agency service providers
- Adds \$360,000 General Fund (\$855,000 Global Commitment) for alternatives to Emergency Room beds
- Funds Howard Center Outreach Program with \$160,000 General Fund and First Call grants that embed clinicians in pediatric offices with \$249,411 General Fund

Health Care

- Provides \$4.5 million General Fund (\$10.9 million Global Commitment) to Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Rural Health Centers (RHCs) for 2% rate increases
- Adds \$2.8 million General Fund (\$6.8 million Global Commitment) for match for Home and Community Based Services based on 2023 Rate Study

- Provides funds and six positions to the Green Mountain Care Board (GMCB) related to the expansion of AHEAD and other health care reform initiatives including reference-based pricing (per S.126)
- Adds \$15.4 million Global Commitment for statutory nursing home rate increase and nursing home beds
- Provides \$5.7 million General Fund for the Vermont Veterans' Home budget

Other

- Provides a 3% increase to the University of Vermont (UVM), Vermont State Colleges (VSC), and the
- Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC)
- Establishes two new positions at the Human Rights Commission
- Adds \$450,000 for community-based services for survivors of domestic and sexual violence

One-Time General Fund Appropriations Include:

Housing

- \$30.5 million for Emergency Housing
- \$2.0 million in DCF's Office of Economic Opportunity for shelter bed expansion
- \$5.0 million for VHCB housing initiatives
- \$4.3 million for Vermont Housing Improvement Program 2.0 (VHIP) funding and position
- \$13.5 million for the Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA) Middle-Income Homeownership Development Program and VHFA Rental Revolving Loan Fund
- \$1.0 million for the VHFA First Generation Homebuyer Program
- \$9.1 million for the Vermont Bond Bank Infrastructure Sustainability Fund
- \$235,000 to the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) for expansion of the HomeShare Program

Health Care and Human Services

- \$4.4 million to AHS for Support and Services at Home (SASH) and Blueprint for Health programs
- \$2.25 million to AHS for feasibility analysis and transformation plan development with hospitals, designated agencies, primary care organizations, and other community-based providers
- \$840,000 to the Department of Vermont Health Access (DVHA) for Comprehensive Payment Reform
- \$3.1 million to DVHA for the OneCare Primary Care Transition
- \$40,000 to the Department of Health (VDH) for Empty Arms Vermont
- \$800,000 to VDH for Recovery Residences utilizing Substance Misuse Prevention funding
- \$200,000 to VDH for youth mentoring services utilizing Substance Misuse Prevention funding

Higher Education

- \$5.0 million to VSC for transformation bridge funding
- \$1.5 million to VSAC for Freedom and Unity grants
- \$750,000 to UVM for the Vermont Gallium Nitride Tech Hub

Other

- Transfers \$77.2 million General Fund to the Education Fund be used for property tax relief
- \$1.0 million base appropriation for four years to the Agency of Education (AOE) for education transformation and capacity building
- \$450,000 to the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (AAFM) for a grant to the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont for the Crop Cash and Crop Cash Plus programs
- \$500,000 to AAFM for a grant to Vermont Foodbank for the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Program
- \$1.1 million for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- \$148,000 to the Treasurer for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA)
- \$500,000 to Public Safety for Urban Search and Rescue

Next Steps. The Budget Conference Committee will begin meeting next week to sort out the differences between the House and Senate passed budgets.

→ **Local Headlines of Note**

- [Feds threaten states' transportation funding over noncompliance with immigration enforcement](#)
- [Lt. Gov. John Rodgers discusses his first four months in office](#)
- [The Learning Lobby: As Legislators Seek to Transform Education in Vermont, Lobbyists Make the Cases for Schools Public and Private](#)
- [Vermont's Civil Union Law Was Passed 25 Years Ago, Sparking the Nationwide March to Marriage Equality](#)
- [Vermont Senate approves 2026 budget proposal, but legislators expect to cut spending further amid Gov. Phil Scott's criticism](#)
- [Judge orders state to give motel voucher recipients more notice before evicting them](#)
- [Trump takes Vermont's climate superfund law to court](#)
- [Capitol Recap: As Congress eyes deep cuts to federal spending, Vermont lawmakers ponder their options](#)

→ **VBA Bill Report**

VBA BILL REPORT – WEEK 16 May 3, 2025			
Bill	Sponsors	Description	Status
H 24	Rep. Anne Donahue	An Act Relating to Requiring Retail Businesses to Accept Cash This bill proposes to prohibit a retail business from refusing to accept cash payment.	Committees: House Commerce and Economic Development Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development (01/09/25)

H 45	Rep. Mary-Katherine Stone; Rep. Tiffany Bluemle; Rep. Abbey Duke; Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Bram Kleppner; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Robert Hooper; Rep. Troy Headrick	<p>An Act Relating to Prohibiting Possession of Firearms on Premises Where Alcohol Is Licensed To Be Served</p> <p>This bill proposes to prohibit possession of firearms on premises where alcohol is licensed to be served and to require that notice of the prohibition be posted at each premises.</p>	<p>Committees: House Judiciary</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary (01/21/25)</p>
H 51	Rep. Lucy Boyden; Rep. Matthew Birong	<p>An Act Relating to Miscellaneous Amendments to The Statutes Governing Alcoholic Beverages</p> <p>This bill proposes to: (1) authorize the holder of a fourth-class license to sell its products to not more than eight additional manufacturers or rectifiers; and (2) authorize manufacturers of malt beverages to acquire a retail shipping license and ship malt beverages to first- and second-class licensees.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/21/25)</p>
H 110	Rep. Lucy Boyden	<p>An Act Relating to A Reciprocity Requirement for Out-of-state Consumer Shipping Licenses</p> <p>This bill proposes to limit the issuance of out-of-state malt beverage consumer shipping licenses to breweries that are located in states that allow Vermont brewers to acquire consumer shipping licenses.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/28/25)</p>
H 119	Rep. Carolyn Branagan	<p>An Act Relating to The Beverage Container Redemption System</p> <p>This bill proposes to expand the scope of the beverage container redemption system to include cider, hard kombucha, noncarbonated water, and noncarbonated soft drinks. The bill also would increase the deposit for a container from five cents to 10 cents.</p>	<p>Committees: House Environment</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Environment (01/29/25)</p>

H 144	Rep. Brian Minier; Bridget Burkhardt; Rep. Emilie Krasnow; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Laura Sibilia; Rep. Leonora Dodge; Rep. Lisa Hango; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun	<p>An Act Relating to Enhancing Food Allergen Awareness in Food Service Establishments</p> <p>This bill proposes to require owners and operators of food service establishments to designate employees to complete a food allergen training program. It further proposes to require food service establishments to post signage regarding food allergens.</p>	<p>Committees: House Human Services</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/05/25)</p>
H 260	Rep. Esme Cole; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Ela Chapin; Herb Olson; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Kate McCann; Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Mary Howard; Robert "Rob" North; VL Coffin	<p>An Act Relating to Prohibiting Certain Substances in Food Manufactured, Sold, Or Distributed in Vermont</p> <p>This bill proposes to prohibit the manufacture, sale, delivery, or distribution in commerce of food containing brominated vegetable oil, potassium bromate, propylparaben, or red dye no. 3.</p>	<p>Committees: House Human Services</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/19/25)</p>
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H 376	Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Brian Cina; Rep. Carol Ode; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Mari Cordes; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Phil Pouech; Rep. Troy Headrick	<p>An Act Relating to The Creation Of The Treatment And Recovery Fund And The Labeling And Taxation of Alcoholic Beverages</p> <p>This bill proposes to (1) require all alcoholic beverages sold in the State to bear a label containing a statement of the alcohol content in U.S. Standard Drinks; (2) increase the gallonage taxes on malt beverages and vinous beverages; (3) increase the excise tax on spirits; (4) create the Treatment and Recovery Fund, dedicate the proceeds of the gallonage tax to the Fund, and establish the purposes for which monies from the Fund may be disbursed; and (5) require the Division of Liquor Control t...</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (02/26/25)</p> <p>No action scheduled.</p>

H 377	Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Rep. Chea Waters Evans	An Act Relating to The Local Media Advertising Tax Credit This bill proposes to create an income tax credit for small businesses that purchase advertising in local media outlets.	Committees: House Ways and Means Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Ways and Means (02/26/25)
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S.131	Sen. Phil Baruth	An act relating to approval of an amendment to the charter of the City of Burlington relating to the possession of firearms This bill proposes to approve an amendment to the charter of the City of Burlington to prohibit the possession of firearms in any building or on any real property or parking area under the ownership or control of an establishment licensed to serve alcohol for on- premises consumption.	Committee: House Judiciary Status: Passed the Senate

VBA Legislative Update – Week 17 May 10, 2025

The End is Near

On Friday afternoon, the FY26 Budget Conference Committee finished their work and signed off on their agreement (we will provide a complete final budget report next week). In a usual year, the close of the Budget Conference Committee means the end of the session is about two days away. Not this year!

Included in the final budget agreement was **\$1.5 million for five additional weeks of State House operation this year!** This additional funding will allow the legislature to meet into the first week of June, return on June 16th and 17th for a veto session, and possibly come back in the fall to respond to federal budget cuts.

Lawmakers still have to finish work on the education transformation bill ([H.454](#)), the housing bills ([S.127](#) and [H.479](#)), and the transportation budget bill ([H.488](#)) – at a minimum. Adjournment date is now predicted to be sometime between **May 30 – June 7**. Stay tuned...

To Go Drinks

On Friday, the Senate gave final approval to [H.339](#), the bill that repeals the sunset on the COVID-era law that allows restaurants to sell drinks to-go with a food order. Once the bill is signed by the Governor, the law will be permanently on the books.

→ Local Headlines of Note

- [Financial struggles have pushed Vermont’s largest health insurer to the brink](#)
- [Trump takes Vermont’s climate superfund law to court](#)
- [Vermont House passes tax credit bill after compromise on military pensions](#)
- [Final Reading: A year into Vermont’s wake boat regulations, Senate Natural Resources revisits the rules](#)
- [Health Care Leaders Are Scrambling to Prevent Another Major Insurance Hike](#)
- [Lawmakers Debate Bills They Hope Will Make Immigrants Safe](#)
- [At a cost of nearly \\$120M, lawmakers hold property tax increases to 1%](#)
- [Vermont agriculture secretary says dairy farmers are concerned about migrant farmworker arrests](#)
- [Vermont could combat climate change ... by hosting the Olympics](#)

→ VBA Bill Report

VBA BILL REPORT – WEEK 17 May 10, 2025			
Bill	Sponsors	Description	Status

H 24	Rep. Anne Donahue	<p>An Act Relating to Requiring Retail Businesses to Accept Cash</p> <p>This bill proposes to prohibit a retail business from refusing to accept cash payment.</p>	<p>Committees: House Commerce and Economic Development</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development (01/09/25)</p>
H 45	Rep. Mary-Katherine Stone; Rep. Tiffany Bluemle; Rep. Abbey Duke; Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Rep. Bram Kleppner; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Robert Hooper; Rep. Troy Headrick	<p>An Act Relating to Prohibiting Possession of Firearms on Premises Where Alcohol Is Licensed To Be Served</p> <p>This bill proposes to prohibit possession of firearms on premises where alcohol is licensed to be served and to require that notice of the prohibition be posted at each premises.</p>	<p>Committees: House Judiciary</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary (01/21/25)</p>
H 51	Rep. Lucy Boyden; Rep. Matthew Birong	<p>An Act Relating to Miscellaneous Amendments to The Statutes Governing Alcoholic Beverages</p> <p>This bill proposes to: (1) authorize the holder of a fourth-class license to sell its products to not more than eight additional manufacturers or rectifiers; and (2) authorize manufacturers of malt beverages to acquire a retail shipping license and ship malt beverages to first- and second-class licensees.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/21/25)</p>
H 110	Rep. Lucy Boyden	<p>An Act Relating to A Reciprocity Requirement for Out-of-state Consumer Shipping Licenses</p> <p>This bill proposes to limit the issuance of out-of-state malt beverage consumer shipping licenses to breweries that are located in states that allow Vermont brewers to acquire consumer shipping licenses.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/28/25)</p>
H 119	Rep. Carolyn Branagan	<p>An Act Relating to The Beverage Container Redemption System</p> <p>This bill proposes to expand the scope of the beverage container redemption system to include cider, hard kombucha, noncarbonated water, and noncarbonated soft drinks. The bill also would increase</p>	<p>Committees: House Environment</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Environment (01/29/25)</p>

		the deposit for a container from five cents to 10 cents.	
H 144	Rep. Brian Minier; Bridget Burkhardt; Rep. Emilie Krasnow; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Laura Sibilia; Rep. Leonora Dodge; Rep. Lisa Hango; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun	An Act Relating to Enhancing Food Allergen Awareness in Food Service Establishments This bill proposes to require owners and operators of food service establishments to designate employees to complete a food allergen training program. It further proposes to require food service establishments to post signage regarding food allergens.	Committees: House Human Services Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/05/25)
H 260	Rep. Esme Cole; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Ela Chapin; Herb Olson; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Kate McCann; Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Mary Howard; Robert "Rob" North; VL Coffin	An Act Relating to Prohibiting Certain Substances in Food Manufactured, Sold, Or Distributed in Vermont This bill proposes to prohibit the manufacture, sale, delivery, or distribution in commerce of food containing brominated vegetable oil, potassium bromate, propylparaben, or red dye no. 3.	Committees: House Human Services Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/19/25)
H 339	House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs	An Act Relating to Removing the Repeal Of 7 VSA § 230 This bill proposes to remove the repeal of 7 V.S.A. § 230 (sale of alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption).	Status: Passed by House and Senate Awaiting delivery to Governor
H 376	Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Brian Cina; Rep. Carol Ode; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Mari Cordes; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Phil Pouech; Rep. Troy Headrick	An Act Relating to The Creation Of The Treatment And Recovery Fund And The Labeling And Taxation of Alcoholic Beverages This bill proposes to (1) require all alcoholic beverages sold in the State to bear a label containing a statement of the alcohol content in U.S. Standard Drinks; (2) increase the gallonage taxes on malt beverages and vinous beverages; (3) increase the excise tax on spirits; (4) create the Treatment and Recovery Fund, dedicate the proceeds of the gallonage tax to the Fund, and establish the purposes for which monies from the Fund may be disbursed; and (5) require the Division of Liquor Control t...	Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (02/26/25) No action scheduled.

H 377	Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Rep. Chea Waters Evans	An Act Relating to The Local Media Advertising Tax Credit This bill proposes to create an income tax credit for small businesses that purchase advertising in local media outlets.	Committees: House Ways and Means Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Ways and Means (02/26/25)
S 88	Sen. Wendy Harrison; Sen. Alison Clarkson; Sen. Anne Watson; Joseph "Joe" Major; Sen. Randolph Brock; Sen. Rebecca White; Robert "Rob" Plunkett	An Act Relating to Creating an Enhanced Growth Incentive For Employee-owned Businesses This bill proposes to create a new enhanced incentive for locally owned and controlled employee-owned businesses within the Vermont Employment Growth Incentive Program (VEGI).	Committees: Senate Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs Status: Read 1st time & referred to Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs (02/25/25)
S.131	Sen. Phil Baruth	An act relating to approval of an amendment to the charter of the City of Burlington relating to the possession of firearms This bill proposes to approve an amendment to the charter of the City of Burlington to prohibit the possession of firearms in any building or on any real property or parking area under the ownership or control of an establishment licensed to serve alcohol for on- premises consumption.	Committee: House Government Operation and Military Affairs Status: Passed the Senate

VBA Legislative Update – Week 18 May 17, 2025

→ FY 26 Budget Receives Final Approval – Off to the Governor

On Friday, the FY26 Budget received final approval from the legislature. It's now off to the Governor to (hopefully) be signed into law.

As we reported last week, the approval of the budget usually means that the legislature is hours from adjournment. Not this year! Current estimates are for a June 6 adjournment...

The [FY26 final budget agreement](#) addresses many of the ongoing challenges Vermont faces, including the end of COVID-related federal funding, human services caseload and utilization pressures, and stabilizing property tax growth. To develop this budget, the Committee of Conference worked with administration officials, standing committees and many interested stakeholders, including members of the public and legislators who testified at public hearings or submitted written testimony during the budget building process.

General Fund appropriations total \$2.4 billion and \$190.8 million is transferred to other funds and reserves. \$2.5 million remains unspent (unreserved and unallocated) for future budget needs. Total appropriations from all funds (unduplicated) are \$9.1 billion.

Base Appropriations Include:

◆ Housing

- Fully funds the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) at statutory level of \$36.9 million
- Provides \$2.0 million to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for the Manufactured Home Improvement and Repair Program (MHIR)
- Adds \$1.6 million for the Land Access Opportunity Board previously funded as a one-time expenditure
- Provides \$29.7 million for the Housing Opportunity Grant Program (HOP) that assists homeless individuals in addition to \$3.35 million added to support new shelters opened in fiscal year 2025
- Maintains \$446,253 to address youth homelessness
- Maintains \$8.1 million base appropriation for General Assistance Emergency Housing

◆ Human Services

- Provides a 5% rate increase for infant and toddler care in the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP)
- Provides \$5.1 million General Fund (\$12.1 million Global Commitment) for 2% rate increases for Designated Agencies, Specialized Service Agencies, and other non-Home Health Agency service providers

- Adds \$360,000 General Fund (\$855,000 Global Commitment) for alternatives to Emergency Room beds
- Funds Howard Center Outreach Program with \$160,000 General Fund and First Call grants that embed clinicians in pediatric offices with \$249,411 General Fund

◆ **Health Care**

- Provides \$4.5 million General Fund (\$10.7 million Global Commitment) for rate increases to Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Rural Health Centers (RHCs)
- Adds \$2.8 million General Fund (\$6.8 million Global Commitment) for match for Home and Community Based Services based on 2023 Rate Study
- Adds \$15.4 million Global Commitment for statutory nursing home rate increase and nursing home beds
- Provides \$5.7 million General Fund for the Vermont Veterans' Home budget

◆ **Other**

- Provides a 3% increase to the University of Vermont (UVM), Vermont State Colleges (VSC), and the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC)
- Establishes two new positions at the Human Rights Commission
- Establishes a process to manage moderate reductions to federal funds when the General Assembly is not in session and establishes a contingent appropriations list including resources to help mitigate any changes in available federal funds.

FY 2026 One-Time Appropriations Include:

◆ **Housing**

- \$30.5 million General Fund to DCF for General Assistance Emergency Housing
- \$2.0 million General Fund to DCF's Office of Economic Opportunity (DCF-OEO) for shelter bed expansion
- \$5.0 million General Fund to VHCB for housing initiatives
- \$2.8 million General Fund to VHCB for developmental disability housing initiatives per Act 186 (2022)
- \$4.0 million General Fund to DHCD for the Vermont Housing Improvement Program 2.0 (VHIP 2.0)
- \$16.1 million General Fund to DHCD for the Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA) Middle-Income Homeownership Development and First Generation Homebuyer programs and the Rental Revolving Loan Fund
- \$7.5 million General Fund to DHCD for the Vermont Bond Bank Infrastructure Sustainability Fund
- \$235,000 General Fund to the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) for Home Share

◆ **Health Care and Human Services**

- \$10.8 million Global Commitment to AHS for Support and Services at Home (SASH) and Blueprint for Health programs

- \$840,000 General Fund to the Department of Vermont Health Access (DVHA) for Comprehensive Payment Reform
- \$3.1 million General Fund to DVHA for the OneCare Primary Care Transition
- \$40,000 General Fund to the Department of Health (VDH) for Empty Arms Vermont
- Additional \$1.3 million Substance Misuse Prevention Fundings for recovery centers (\$800,000), recovery residences (\$300,000), and Mentor Vermont (\$200,000)

◆ **Higher Education**

- \$5.0 million General Fund to VSC for the final transformation bridge funding payment
- \$1.5 million General Fund to VSAC for Freedom and Unity grants

◆ **Other General Fund One-Time Highlights**

- Transfers \$77.2 million to the Education Fund be used for property tax relief
- \$450,000 to the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (AAFM) for a grant to the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont for the Crop Cash, Crop Cash Plus and Farm Share programs
- \$500,000 to AAFM for a grant to Vermont Foodbank for the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Program
- \$1.1 million to the Agency of Administration for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- \$148,000 to the Treasurer for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA)

→ **Local Headlines of Note**

- [Vermont legislators send 2026 budget proposal to Gov. Phil Scott after making cuts](#)
- [Vermont has paused PCB testing in schools, but cleanup costs keep piling up](#)
- [With federal cuts on the horizon, the Vermont Legislature builds a reserve](#)
- [Vermont Supreme Court holds Vorsteveld farm in contempt, clouding farm’s expansion bid](#)
- [This year’s main Vermont housing policy gets mired in legislative disagreement](#)
- [The former Montpelier post office building is up for sale. Could it serve the city or state?](#)
- [Final Reading: Is Vermont’s electrical grid safe from hackers?](#)
- [In executive order, Gov. Phil Scott pauses electric vehicle sale mandates](#)
- [Rural Families Feel Disempowered in the Face of Efforts to Reshape Their Schools](#)

→ **VBA Bill Report**

VBA BILL REPORT – WEEK 18			
May 17, 2025			
Bill	Sponsors	Description	Status
MOVING BILLS			

H 339	House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs	<p>An Act Relating to Removing the Repeal Of 7 VSA § 230</p> <p>This bill proposes to remove the repeal of 7 V.S.A. § 230 (sale of alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption).</p>	<p>Status: Passed by House and Senate</p> <p>Awaiting delivery to Governor</p>
S.131	Sen. Phil Baruth	<p>An act relating to approval of an amendment to the charter of the City of Burlington relating to the possession of firearms</p> <p>This bill proposes to approve an amendment to the charter of the City of Burlington to prohibit the possession of firearms in any building or on any real property or parking area under the ownership or control of an establishment licensed to serve alcohol for on- premises consumption.</p>	<p>Committee: House Government Operation and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Passed the Senate</p>
BILLS NOT MOVING THIS YEAR			
H 24	Rep. Anne Donahue	<p>An Act Relating to Requiring Retail Businesses to Accept Cash</p> <p>This bill proposes to prohibit a retail business from refusing to accept cash payment.</p>	<p>Committees: House Commerce and Economic Development</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development (01/09/25)</p>
H 45	Rep. Mary-Katherine Stone; Rep. Tiffany Bluemle; Rep. Abbey Duke; Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Bram Kleppner; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Robert Hooper; Rep. Troy Headrick	<p>An Act Relating to Prohibiting Possession of Firearms on Premises Where Alcohol Is Licensed To Be Served</p> <p>This bill proposes to prohibit possession of firearms on premises where alcohol is licensed to be served and to require that notice of the prohibition be posted at each premises.</p>	<p>Committees: House Judiciary</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary (01/21/25)</p>
H 51	Rep. Lucy Boyden; Rep. Matthew Birong	<p>An Act Relating to Miscellaneous Amendments to The Statutes Governing Alcoholic Beverages</p> <p>This bill proposes to: (1) authorize the holder of a fourth-class license to sell its products to not more than eight additional manufacturers or rectifiers; and (2) authorize manufacturers of malt beverages to</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/21/25)</p>

		acquire a retail shipping license and ship malt beverages to first- and second-class licensees.	
H 110	Rep. Lucy Boyden	An Act Relating to A Reciprocity Requirement for Out-of-state Consumer Shipping Licenses This bill proposes to limit the issuance of out-of-state malt beverage consumer shipping licenses to breweries that are located in states that allow Vermont brewers to acquire consumer shipping licenses.	Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/28/25)
H 119	Rep. Carolyn Branagan	An Act Relating to The Beverage Container Redemption System This bill proposes to expand the scope of the beverage container redemption system to include cider, hard kombucha, noncarbonated water, and noncarbonated soft drinks. The bill also would increase the deposit for a container from five cents to 10 cents.	Committees: House Environment Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Environment (01/29/25)
H 144	Rep. Brian Minier; Bridget Burkhardt; Rep. Emilie Krasnow; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Laura Sibilia; Rep. Leonora Dodge; Rep. Lisa Hango; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun	An Act Relating to Enhancing Food Allergen Awareness in Food Service Establishments This bill proposes to require owners and operators of food service establishments to designate employees to complete a food allergen training program. It further proposes to require food service establishments to post signage regarding food allergens.	Committees: House Human Services Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/05/25)
H 260	Rep. Esme Cole; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Ela Chapin; Herb Olson; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Kate McCann; Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Mary Howard; Robert "Rob" North; VL Coffin	An Act Relating to Prohibiting Certain Substances in Food Manufactured, Sold, Or Distributed in Vermont This bill proposes to prohibit the manufacture, sale, delivery, or distribution in commerce of food containing brominated vegetable oil, potassium bromate, propylparaben, or red dye no. 3.	Committees: House Human Services Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/19/25)

H 376	Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Brian Cina; Rep. Carol Ode; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Mari Cordes; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Phil Pouech; Rep. Troy Headrick	<p>An Act Relating to The Creation Of The Treatment And Recovery Fund And The Labeling And Taxation of Alcoholic Beverages</p> <p>This bill proposes to (1) require all alcoholic beverages sold in the State to bear a label containing a statement of the alcohol content in U.S. Standard Drinks; (2) increase the gallonage taxes on malt beverages and vinous beverages; (3) increase the excise tax on spirits; (4) create the Treatment and Recovery Fund, dedicate the proceeds of the gallonage tax to the Fund, and establish the purposes for which monies from the Fund may be disbursed; and (5) require the Division of Liquor Control t...</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (02/26/25)</p>
H 377	Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Rep. Chea Waters Evans	<p>An Act Relating to The Local Media Advertising Tax Credit</p> <p>This bill proposes to create an income tax credit for small businesses that purchase advertising in local media outlets.</p>	<p>Committees: House Ways and Means</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Ways and Means (02/26/25)</p>
S 88	Sen. Wendy Harrison; Sen. Alison Clarkson; Sen. Anne Watson; Joseph "Joe" Major; Sen. Randolph Brock; Sen. Rebecca White; Robert "Rob" Plunkett	<p>An Act Relating to Creating an Enhanced Growth Incentive For Employee-owned Businesses</p> <p>This bill proposes to create a new enhanced incentive for locally owned and controlled employee-owned businesses within the Vermont Employment Growth Incentive Program (VEGI).</p>	<p>Committees: Senate Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read 1st time & referred to Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs (02/25/25)</p>

VBA Legislative Update – Week 19 May 24, 2025

→ **Overtime.** Last Wednesday the Governor signed the FY 26 budget bill ([highlights here](#)). In a normal year, lawmakers would be home now tending their gardens. This is definitely NOT a normal year – in more ways than one. Two major areas of policy reform are keeping lawmakers in session: an overhaul of the education tax and governance systems ([H.454](#)), and a housing and development bill ([S.127](#)). Both bills should be in conference committees by the middle of next week. It could take a week or longer for the House and Senate to sort out their differences on each bill. Adjournment is now looking like June 6th or 7th.

→ Local Headlines of Note

- [Vermont Senate passes landmark education bill after days of debate and uncertainty](#)
- [Divided lawmakers keep housing bill hobbling toward finish line](#)
- [Summer's Back, but Canadian Tourists Are Not](#)
- [School Leaders Speak Against Ed Reform Bill Ahead of Vote](#)
- [Lt. Gov. and Weed Farmer Rodgers Pushes a Bill That Would Slash His Costs](#)
- [Just before a key vote, Scott administration's position on motel program overhaul is unclear](#)
- [Final Reading: Gov. Phil Scott says he'll veto proposed gun ban in Burlington bars](#)
- [Federal government cancels Vermont's \\$5.3 million digital equity grant](#)
- [Scott promotes housing legislation, action at weekly press conference](#)
- [PAI: Vermont job-seekers find fewer options](#)

→ VBA Bill Report

VBA BILL REPORT – WEEK 19 May 24, 2025			
Bill	Sponsors	Description	Status
MOVING BILLS			
H 339	House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs	An Act Relating to Removing the Repeal Of 7 VSA § 230 This bill proposes to remove the repeal of 7 V.S.A. § 230 (sale of alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption).	Status: Passed by House and Senate Delivered to Governor on 5/21 Awaiting signature by Governor

S.131	Sen. Phil Baruth	<p>An act relating to approval of an amendment to the charter of the City of Burlington relating to the possession of firearms</p> <p>This bill proposes to approve an amendment to the charter of the City of Burlington to prohibit the possession of firearms in any building or on any real property or parking area under the ownership or control of an establishment licensed to serve alcohol for on- premises consumption.</p>	<p>Committee: House Government Operation and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Passed the Senate</p>
BILLS NOT MOVING THIS YEAR			
H 24	Rep. Anne Donahue	<p>An Act Relating to Requiring Retail Businesses to Accept Cash</p> <p>This bill proposes to prohibit a retail business from refusing to accept cash payment.</p>	<p>Committees: House Commerce and Economic Development</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development (01/09/25)</p>
H 45	Rep. Mary-Katherine Stone; Rep. Tiffany Bluemle; Rep. Abbey Duke; Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Bram Kleppner; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Robert Hooper; Rep. Troy Headrick	<p>An Act Relating to Prohibiting Possession of Firearms on Premises Where Alcohol Is Licensed To Be Served</p> <p>This bill proposes to prohibit possession of firearms on premises where alcohol is licensed to be served and to require that notice of the prohibition be posted at each premises.</p>	<p>Committees: House Judiciary</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary (01/21/25)</p>
H 51	Rep. Lucy Boyden; Rep. Matthew Birong	<p>An Act Relating to Miscellaneous Amendments to The Statutes Governing Alcoholic Beverages</p> <p>This bill proposes to: (1) authorize the holder of a fourth-class license to sell its products to not more than eight additional manufacturers or rectifiers; and (2) authorize manufacturers of malt beverages to acquire a retail shipping license and ship malt beverages to first- and second-class licensees.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/21/25)</p>

H 110	Rep. Lucy Boyden	<p>An Act Relating to A Reciprocity Requirement for Out-of-state Consumer Shipping Licenses</p> <p>This bill proposes to limit the issuance of out-of-state malt beverage consumer shipping licenses to breweries that are located in states that allow Vermont brewers to acquire consumer shipping licenses.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/28/25)</p>
H 119	Rep. Carolyn Branagan	<p>An Act Relating to The Beverage Container Redemption System</p> <p>This bill proposes to expand the scope of the beverage container redemption system to include cider, hard kombucha, noncarbonated water, and noncarbonated soft drinks. The bill also would increase the deposit for a container from five cents to 10 cents.</p>	<p>Committees: House Environment</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Environment (01/29/25)</p>
H 144	Rep. Brian Minier; Bridget Burkhardt; Rep. Emilie Krasnow; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Laura Sibilia; Rep. Leonora Dodge; Rep. Lisa Hango; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun	<p>An Act Relating to Enhancing Food Allergen Awareness in Food Service Establishments</p> <p>This bill proposes to require owners and operators of food service establishments to designate employees to complete a food allergen training program. It further proposes to require food service establishments to post signage regarding food allergens.</p>	<p>Committees: House Human Services</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/05/25)</p>
H 260	Rep. Esme Cole; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Ela Chapin; Herb Olson; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Kate McCann; Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Mary Howard; Robert "Rob" North; VL Coffin	<p>An Act Relating to Prohibiting Certain Substances in Food Manufactured, Sold, Or Distributed in Vermont</p> <p>This bill proposes to prohibit the manufacture, sale, delivery, or distribution in commerce of food containing brominated vegetable oil, potassium bromate, propylparaben, or red dye no. 3.</p>	<p>Committees: House Human Services</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/19/25)</p>
H 376	Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Brian Cina; Rep. Carol Ode; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Mari Cordes; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Phil Pouech; Rep. Troy Headrick	<p>An Act Relating to The Creation Of The Treatment And Recovery Fund And The Labeling And Taxation of Alcoholic Beverages</p> <p>This bill proposes to (1) require all alcoholic beverages sold in the State to bear a label containing a</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government</p>

		statement of the alcohol content in U.S. Standard Drinks; (2) increase the gallonage taxes on malt beverages and vinous beverages; (3) increase the excise tax on spirits; (4) create the Treatment and Recovery Fund, dedicate the proceeds of the gallonage tax to the Fund, and establish the purposes for which monies from the Fund may be disbursed; and (5) require the Division of Liquor Control t...	Operations and Military Affairs (02/26/25)
H 377	Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Rep. Chea Waters Evans	An Act Relating to The Local Media Advertising Tax Credit This bill proposes to create an income tax credit for small businesses that purchase advertising in local media outlets.	Committees: House Ways and Means Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Ways and Means (02/26/25)
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VBA Legislative Update – Week 20

June 1, 2025

FINAL REPORT

→ **The End...For Now.** Vermont's 2025 legislative session unfolded under unusual pressure: from a shifting political balance to looming federal funding threats. Lawmakers navigated a more fractured landscape, with a focus on education reform, housing, and fiscal resilience.

◆Session Overview

Vermont's 2025 legislative session has not officially adjourned. Lawmakers were sent home on Friday, May 30, with the exception of the members of the [H.454](#) Education Reform bill committee of conference.

Over the next two weeks, House and Senate conferees will negotiate with the Governor's office to finalize a compromise. The full legislature is expected to reconvene on June 16 and 17 to vote on the final version of the bill.

◆Shifting Political Dynamics

The 2024 elections shifted Vermont's political landscape. Democrats lost more seats than in any other state, ending their supermajority. This created new negotiating dynamics between the Democratic-controlled legislature and Republican Governor Scott, who took an increasingly assertive stance using veto and special session threats as leverage.

In particular, the session was marked by negotiations over education reform, housing initiatives, health care, and preparation for potential federal funding cuts under the Trump administration.

◆Major Legislative Accomplishments

- ✓ **[Budget \(H.493\)](#)**: Governor Phil Scott signed a \$9.01 billion spending plan on May 21, including \$77 million in general fund transfers to stabilize property taxes, prioritizing housing, child care and higher education, and \$13.5 million of targeted tax relief.
- ✓ **[Housing Legislation \(S.127\)](#)**: The House and Senate came to a compromise on a key housing bill to address Vermont's need for 41,000 additional homes by 2030. The primary focus was the Community and Housing Infrastructure Program (CHIP) to expand infrastructure financing options for housing development in small and large towns alike.
- ✓ **[Medical Debt Relief \(S.27\)](#)**: This landmark legislation will erase an estimated \$100 million in Vermonters' medical debt using \$1 million in state funds, and prohibits medical debt from being included on consumer credit reports.

- ✓ **[Solar Net Metering Expansion \(S.50\)](#)**: This bill expands solar net metering projects that can receive streamlined approval processes. This builds on broader renewable energy policy changes that occurred in the previous session (2024), where Vermont passed a major overhaul of the state's Renewable Energy Standard
- ✓ **Expansion of the authority of the Green Mountain Care Board.** A number of bills were passed this session aimed at giving more authority to the GMCB to reign in hospital costs and shore up the state's largest health insurer, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Vermont. The bills include:
 - [An act relating to health care payment and delivery system reform \(S.126\)](#)
 - [An act relating to Green Mountain Care Board authority to adjust a hospital's reimbursement rates and to appoint a hospital observer \(H.482\)](#)
- ✓ **[Economic and Workforce Development Bill \(S.122\)](#)**: This bill is focused on supporting economic and workforce development initiatives for small businesses, workforce training, and economic development programs.
- ✓ **[School Phone Ban legislation \(H.480\)](#)**: This law requires all of Vermont's public school districts and independent schools to develop policies prohibiting students from using smartphones and other personal devices like smartwatches during the school day, with policies taking effect by the 2026-2027 school year.
- ✓ **[Vermont Age-Appropriate Design Code \(S.69\)](#)**: The age-appropriate design code bill, also known as Vermont Kids Code (S.69), requires social media companies to adjust algorithms and design codes for users under 18 years old with the aim of making them less addictive and harmful for teens.
- ✓ **[Homelessness System Overhaul \(H.91\)](#)**: This bill would fundamentally overhaul Vermont's response to homelessness by dissolving the motel voucher program next summer and replacing it with the Vermont Homeless Emergency Assistance and Responsive Transition to Housing (VHEARTH) Program run by local non-profit social service organizations.
- ✓ **[Constitutional Amendment on Collective Bargaining \(PR.3\)](#)**: PR.3 is a proposed constitutional amendment that would enshrine in the Vermont Constitution the right of Vermont workers to organize and collectively bargain. The proposal will be on the general election ballot in November 2026.

◆Federal Funding Concerns

Vermont is proactively addressing potential federal cuts under the Trump administration, given that approximately \$3 billion (one-third of the state budget) comes from federal sources. The state has established multiple contingency measures:

- **Legal Response**: Vermont has joined multi-state lawsuits against federal funding freezes.
- **Financial Reserves**: This 2026 fiscal year budget sets aside \$60 million for federal shortfalls, with access to \$100 million "rainy day" fund.
- **Emergency Powers**: The 2026 fiscal year budget also authorizes the Emergency Board to respond quickly to cuts.

- **Graduated Response:** The Emergency Board is authorized to implement agency reductions of between 1-4%. While the full legislature will be recalled to address federal cuts of greater than 4%.

◆ **Turning to the 2026 Session:**

The 2026 session will likely focus on reforms to Vermont’s Act 250 land use law and additional housing regulatory streamlining. Lawmakers are also expected to continue implementing education funding reforms, expand energy and climate policies, and seek long-term stabilization of the state’s health care system.

→ **Local Headlines of Note**

- [Final Reading: Vermont Senate weighs new drug price caps as adjournment deadline looms](#)
- [Vermont judge orders Harvard scientist freed from ICE custody, calling her detention unlawful](#)
- [‘We need help’: While tallying recent assistance, Vermont officials consider a future without FEMA](#)
- [Final Reading: As lawmakers hash out differences on education, Gov. Phil Scott’s presence looms large](#)
- [Committee Hashing Out Education Reform Bill Jumps the Gun](#)
- [Lawmakers Debate Competing Needs for Housing, School Funding](#)
- [Proposed Medicaid Cuts Would Have Big Impact in Vermont](#)
- [Amphibian road mortality drops by over 80% with wildlife underpasses](#)
- [Vermont one step closer to cellphone ban in schools](#)

→ **VBA Bill Report**

VBA BILL REPORT – WEEK 20			
June 1, 2025			
Bill	Sponsors	Description	Status
MOVING BILLS			
H 339	House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs	An Act Relating to Removing the Repeal Of 7 VSA § 230 This bill proposes to remove the repeal of 7 V.S.A. § 230 (sale of alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption).	Status: Signed into law.
S.131	Sen. Phil Baruth	An act relating to approval of an amendment to the charter of the City of Burlington relating to the possession of firearms This bill proposes to approve an amendment to the charter of the City of Burlington to prohibit the possession of firearms in any building or on any real property or	Committee: House Government Operation and Military Affairs Status: Passed the Senate

		parking area under the ownership or control of an establishment licensed to serve alcohol for on- premises consumption.	
BILLS NOT MOVING THIS YEAR			
H 24	Rep. Anne Donahue	An Act Relating to Requiring Retail Businesses to Accept Cash This bill proposes to prohibit a retail business from refusing to accept cash payment.	Committees: House Commerce and Economic Development Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development (01/09/25)
H 45	Rep. Mary-Katherine Stone; Rep. Tiffany Bluemle; Rep. Abbey Duke; Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Bram Kleppner; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Robert Hooper; Rep. Troy Headrick	An Act Relating to Prohibiting Possession of Firearms on Premises Where Alcohol Is Licensed To Be Served This bill proposes to prohibit possession of firearms on premises where alcohol is licensed to be served and to require that notice of the prohibition be posted at each premises.	Committees: House Judiciary Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary (01/21/25)
H 51	Rep. Lucy Boyden; Rep. Matthew Birong	An Act Relating to Miscellaneous Amendments to The Statutes Governing Alcoholic Beverages This bill proposes to: (1) authorize the holder of a fourth-class license to sell its products to not more than eight additional manufacturers or rectifiers; and (2) authorize manufacturers of malt beverages to acquire a retail shipping license and ship malt beverages to first- and second-class licensees.	Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/21/25)
H 110	Rep. Lucy Boyden	An Act Relating to A Reciprocity Requirement for Out-of-state Consumer Shipping Licenses This bill proposes to limit the issuance of out-of-state malt beverage consumer shipping licenses to breweries that are located in states that allow Vermont brewers to acquire consumer shipping licenses.	Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/28/25)
H 119	Rep. Carolyn Branagan	An Act Relating to The Beverage Container Redemption System	Committees: House Environment

		This bill proposes to expand the scope of the beverage container redemption system to include cider, hard kombucha, noncarbonated water, and noncarbonated soft drinks. The bill also would increase the deposit for a container from five cents to 10 cents.	Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Environment (01/29/25)
H 144	Rep. Brian Minier; Bridget Burkhardt; Rep. Emilie Krasnow; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Laura Sibilia; Rep. Leonora Dodge; Rep. Lisa Hango; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun	An Act Relating to Enhancing Food Allergen Awareness in Food Service Establishments This bill proposes to require owners and operators of food service establishments to designate employees to complete a food allergen training program. It further proposes to require food service establishments to post signage regarding food allergens.	Committees: House Human Services Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/05/25)
H 260	Rep. Esme Cole; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Ela Chapin; Herb Olson; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Kate McCann; Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Mary Howard; Robert "Rob" North; VL Coffin	An Act Relating to Prohibiting Certain Substances in Food Manufactured, Sold, Or Distributed in Vermont This bill proposes to prohibit the manufacture, sale, delivery, or distribution in commerce of food containing brominated vegetable oil, potassium bromate, propylparaben, or red dye no. 3.	Committees: House Human Services Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/19/25)
H 376	Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Brian Cina; Rep. Carol Ode; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Mari Cordes; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Phil Pouech; Rep. Troy Headrick	An Act Relating to The Creation Of The Treatment And Recovery Fund And The Labeling And Taxation of Alcoholic Beverages This bill proposes to (1) require all alcoholic beverages sold in the State to bear a label containing a statement of the alcohol content in U.S. Standard Drinks; (2) increase the gallonage taxes on malt beverages and vinous beverages; (3) increase the excise tax on spirits; (4) create the Treatment and Recovery Fund, dedicate the proceeds of the gallonage tax to the Fund, and establish the purposes for which monies from the Fund may be disbursed; and (5) require the Division of Liquor Control t...	Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (02/26/25)

<u>H 377</u>	Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Rep. Chea Waters Evans	An Act Relating to The Local Media Advertising Tax Credit This bill proposes to create an income tax credit for small businesses that purchase advertising in local media outlets.	Committees: House Ways and Means Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Ways and Means (02/26/25)
<u>S 88</u>	Sen. Wendy Harrison; Sen. Alison Clarkson; Sen. Anne Watson; Joseph "Joe" Major; Sen. Randolph Brock; Sen. Rebecca White; Robert "Rob" Plunkett	An Act Relating to Creating an Enhanced Growth Incentive For Employee-owned Businesses This bill proposes to create a new enhanced incentive for locally owned and controlled employee-owned businesses within the Vermont Employment Growth Incentive Program (VEGI).	Committees: Senate Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs Status: Read 1st time & referred to Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs (02/25/25)