

VBA Legislative Update – – Week 11 March 28, 2026

→ **Budget Bill.** This past week, the House gave final approval to [H. 951](#), the FY 2027 Appropriations Bill. The \$9.334 billion spending plan is roughly \$1 million less than Gov. Phil Scott's proposed \$9.335 billion budget.

Changes to Base Spending - Highlights:

Health Care and Human Services

- \$6.81 million for Designated Agencies, Specialized Service Agencies, and Home and Community Based Service providers, including Medicaid skilled home health services
- \$500,000 to the Bridges to Health Program
- Appropriates additional funding for the Area Health Education Centers program (AHEC) to continue offering medical professional primary care loan repayment and primary care provider placement services
- \$924,000 Global Commitment to Vermont's Free and Referral Clinics to support healthcare services to Vermonters without health insurance
- Maintains level funding for 2-1-1 through the Department for Children and Families (DCF) to ensure adequate resources for peak demand
- \$450,000 Increase in Global Commitment appropriation to the Office of the Health Care Advocate

Housing

- Establishes the Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP) as a \$4.00 million General Fund base appropriation within the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)
- Fully funds the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) at statutory level of \$37.65 million
- \$61.45 million in base funding to DCF for homelessness response initiatives in H.938, including the Vermont Homelessness Response Continuum, Housing Opportunity Grant Program operations, temporary emergency housing, and shelter development (in addition to a \$21.18 million one-time appropriation to DCF for this purpose)
- \$1.68 million to the base budget for the Land Access and Opportunity Board
- Establishes a new permanent classified Disabilities Housing Coordinator position within the Department of Aging and Independent Living (DAIL)

Other

- Sets aside \$28.63 million in anticipation of the fiscal year 2027 Pay Act
- \$1.80 million to the Office of the Secretary of State to support the Vermont Access Network
- Establishes several other new positions, including a mediator at the State Labor Relations Board, an attorney at the State Ethics Commission to focus on municipal ethics referrals and trainings, and an attorney at the Human Rights Commission

- Includes \$350,000 for the Defender General for additional public defense contracting and training needs
- 3% increase to the University of Vermont (UVM), Vermont State Colleges (VSC), and the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC)

One-Time Investments - Highlights

General Government and Protection to Persons and Property

- \$110,000 to the Agency of Administration (AoA) for the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Action, Leadership initiative (IDEAL)
- \$900,000 to AoA to complete the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- \$590,000 to the Office of the Secretary of State for Local Civic Journalism Awards (\$50,000), community radio station support (\$90,000), and election administration (\$450,000)
- \$225,000 to the Office of the State Treasurer for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (\$150,000) and the Pension and Benefits Funding Task Force in H.567 (\$75,000)

Health Care and Human Services

- \$21.18 million to DCF for homelessness response initiatives in H.938 (in addition to \$61.45 million in base funding to DCF for this purpose)
- \$2.00 million to the Department of Vermont Health Access (DVHA) for provider stabilization grants
- \$1.19 million Global Commitment to DAIL for Meals on Wheels
- \$300,000 to DVHA to make information technology updates due to federal Medicaid changes
- \$180,000 to DCF for a grant to the Parent Child Center Network for concrete supports programs
- \$300,000 to Vermont Legal Aid for an immigration attorney to support the Immigrant Minor Guardianship Project (\$200,000) and the Vermont Legal Aid Helpline (\$100,000 Global Commitment)
- \$195,000 Global Commitment to DCF to grant to Prevent Child Abuse Vermont for nurturing parenting programs
- \$150,000 for school cardiac response plans required by Act 72 of 2025

Housing

- \$1.00 million to DHCD to grant to the Vermont State Housing Authority for the Rent Arrears Assistance Fund created by Act 47 of 2023
- \$800,000 to DHCD for the Manufactured Home Improvement and Repair Program (MHIR)
- \$235,000 to DAIL for a grant to HomeShare Vermont

Other

- \$500,000 to the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) for Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) grants
- \$900,000 to the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (AAFM) for the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont's Crop Cash, Crop Cash Plus, and Farm Share programs (\$500,000) and the Vermont Foodbank's Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Program (\$400,000)
- \$300,000 to AAFM for Vermont's Natural Resource Conservation Districts

- \$182,000 to the Agency of Education (AOE) for the Child and Adult Care Food Program
- \$2.32 million to VSAC for Freedom and Unity Scholarships and to raise the family income eligibility threshold for these scholarships from \$65,000 to \$80,000
- \$1.34 million Community Resilience and Disaster Mitigation Fund to AoA for disaster relief assistance to communities impacted by severe flooding in calendar year 2025

The package now heads to the Senate for consideration.

→ **The Week Ahead for VBA**

- [Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs](#). Next week, Senate Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs [agenda](#) includes consideration of the following of interest to VBA:
 - o Wed. 11am. [H. 921 - An act relating to alcoholic beverages](#). Witnesses include: Rep. Lucy Boyden, Wendy Knight, DLL and Tucker Anderson, Leg. Counsel.

- **VBA in the Statehouse!** On Friday, April 3, the VBA will be tabling in the Card Room at the Statehouse. Emma and I will be talking with lawmakers about the VBA, H.921 and other matters of interest to the Vermont craft beer marketplace.

→ **Update on VBA Issues**

Miscellaneous Alcohol Bill. As noted about, next week, the Senate Economic Development Housing and General Affairs Committee will hold an introductory hearing on [H.921, the Miscellaneous Alcohol Bill](#). We expect they will schedule further testimony in the coming 2 -3 weeks.

Updates to the Bottle Bill. Last week, the House passed [H.915, a bill that makes significant changes to Vermont’s bottle redemption system](#). The bill was referred to the Senate Natural Resources and Energy committee where it already had its first introductory hearing.

Last Friday, the VBA GAC met with [Bree Dietley](#), a long-time consultant on materials management and stewardship programs. She has worked on the current proposal on behalf of the Beverage Association of Vermont (mostly soda distributors). She was very helpful in helping VBA members gain a deeper understanding of the mechanics of the new proposal. The VBA will continue to monitor this bill and work with other stakeholders to ensure that the final version of the bill is technically correct when it comes to the roles of manufacturers and distributors under the proposal.

→ **VBA Bill Report.**

Bill	Sponsors	Description	Status
H 647	Rep. Lucy Boyden	An Act Relating to Vinous Beverage Manufacturers and Fourth-class Licenses	Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs

<p>(now H.921)</p>		<p>This bill proposes to allow the holder of a fourth-class license to serve customers larger total volumes of alcoholic beverages at a tasting room or retail shop operated by the licensee. This bill also proposes to allow manufacturers of vinous beverages to operate not more than two first-class licensed establishments that are located at the licensed manufacturing facility or on property that is owned by the licensee and contiguous with the parcel of land on which the licensed manufacturing facility...</p>	<p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/13/26)</p> <p>Folded into H.921 (see below)</p>
<p>H 655 (now H.921)</p>	<p>Rep. Lucy Boyden; Rep. Matthew Birong</p>	<p>An Act Relating To Alcoholic Beverages And The Board Of Liquor And Lottery</p> <p>This bill proposes to amend various provisions of Title 7 to change the term length for members of the Board of Liquor and Lottery from three years to four years, eliminate the specific limitation on the hours of sale for licensees who sell alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption pursuant to 7 V.S.A. § 230, state that special events permits are subject to approval by the local control commissioners in conformance with the definition of "special event permit" in Title 7, eliminate language...</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 (01/13/26)</p> <p>Folded into H.921 (see below)</p>
<p>H 672 (now H.921)</p>	<p>Rep. Lucy Boyden</p>	<p>An Act Relating to Distribution of Malt Beverages by Licensed Manufacturers</p> <p>This bill proposes to authorize licensed malt beverage manufacturers to distribute malt beverages directly to the holders of first- or second-class licenses. This bill also proposes to limit the total amount of malt beverages that a licensed manufacturer may distribute directly to licensees on an annual basis.</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 (01/14/26)</p> <p>Folded into H.921 (see below)</p>

<p>H 832 (now H.921)</p>	<p>Rep. Lucy Boyden</p>	<p>An Act Relating to Fourth-class Licenses and Retail Alcoholic Beverage Tasting Permits</p> <p>This bill proposes to authorize licensed alcoholic beverage manufacturers, at not more than 10 fourth-class license locations, to sell alcoholic beverages produced by other manufacturers. This bill also proposes to amend the application requirements for retail alcoholic beverage tasting permits to allow a licensee to submit the application and fee at least one day before the proposed date of the tasting event.</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 (01/29/26)</p> <p>Folded into H.921 (see below)</p>
<p>H.915</p>	<p>House Committee on Environment</p>	<p>An act relating to establishing an extended producer responsibility program for beverage containers</p> <p>This bill proposes to require all manufacturers and distributors of covered beverage containers to participate in a producer responsibility organization that shall manage the collection and disposition of beverage containers.</p>	<p>Committees: Senate Natural Resources and Energy</p> <p>Status: PASSED THE HOUSE</p>
<p>H.921</p>	<p>House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs</p>	<p>An act relating to alcoholic beverages</p> <p>This bill proposes to amend various provisions of Title 7 related to the Board of Liquor and Lottery, fourth- class licenses, manufacturers of alcoholic beverages, special events permits, and special venue serving permits.</p>	<p>Committees: Senate Economic Development Housing and General Affairs</p> <p>Status: PASSED HOUSE</p>
<p>S 236</p>	<p>Sen. Alison Clarkson; Sen. Richard Westman</p>	<p>An Act Relating To Vinous Beverage Manufacturers and Fourth-class Licenses</p> <p>This bill proposes to allow the holder of a fourth-class license to serve customers larger total volumes of alcoholic beverages at a tasting room or retail shop operated by the licensee. This bill also proposes to allow manufacturers of vinous beverages to operate not more than two first-class licensed establishments that are located at the licensed manufacturing facility or on property that is owned by the licensee and contiguous with the parcel of land on which the licensed manufacturing facility...</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 (01/09/26)</p>

<p>S 279</p>	<p>Sen. Kesha Ram Hinsdale; Sen. David Weeks; Sen. Patrick Brennan; Sen. Richard Westman</p>	<p>An Act Relating to Caterer's Licenses and the Distribution of Malt Beverages by Licensed Manufacturers</p> <p>This bill proposes to authorize licensed malt beverage manufacturers to distribute malt beverages directly to the holders of first- or second-class licenses. This bill also proposes to limit the total amount of malt beverages that a licensed manufacturer may distribute directly to licensees on an annual basis. This bill also proposes to amend the definition of caterer's license to repeal the restriction on serving alcoholic beverages at first- or first- and third-class licensed locations.</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 (01/21/26)</p>
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