

VPA LEGISLATIVE REPORT #7

Last week the Legislature was in recess for Town Meetings.

Since the last Legislative report **nearly 200 new bills** were posted on the Legislative Council web site.

Of note:

H. 322 – **VT Rail Authority** – separating rail from VTRANS under a new separate authority.

H.326 – **Licensure of Landscape Architects.**

H. 334 – **Discontinuance of Ancient Roads** - reverts title to old roads to abutters if not depicted on 2005 State Highway Aid / Mileage Maps or not otherwise preserved as Town Highways by successful appeal of Select Board to VTRANS within one year.

H. 343 - **Current Use lands** – as a condition of enrollment requiring any forest lands to be made available for public recreational use.

H. 356 – **Eliminating property tax exemption for Conservation Land.**

H. 365 – **Limits to 20 yrs the validity of any publicly funded conservation restrictions on Agricultural land.**

H. 378 – Allowing **deferral of property taxes for elderly** (over 65) who have lived on a premises at least 10yrs without having been tax delinquent and who are eligible for income sensitivity; deferred taxes would become a lien and would be repaid to the Town with interest upon conveyance of their property.

H. 392 – **Act 250 Ag lands Mitigation** - Amends Act 250, changes definition of Primary Agricultural Soils; changes definition of Forest and Secondary Ag Soils to ‘productive forest soils’; deletes standards referring to return on fair market value, reasonable population densities and rates of growth and cluster planning; allows on or off-site mitigation as a result of development or subdivision; establishes formulas for mitigation fees but exempts affordable housing developments and provides a lower mitigation requirement for projects in designated downtown districts, business or industrial parks, or “areas designated for residential or other economic growth”.

H. 406 – exempting from property taxes all land used for dairy farming

H. 409 - \$1 Million for incentives for small scale renewable energy systems

H. 412 Gas and Diesel tax increases – indexed and adjusted for increased State & local highways

H. 447 – regulating municipal ordinances related to firearms, hunting and trapping; nullifying certain local provisions requiring approval by the General Assembly of local ordinances and providing retroactive relief for nuisance actions brought against shooting ranges and clubs.

H. 453 – relating to local financing of electric transmission facilities

H. 464 - **Redevelopment Zones (“Brownfields”)**

H. 475 – simplifying affordable housing development

H. 488 - Municipal ownership of streetlight systems

H. 492 – relating to on-site wastewater disposal systems

H. 493 - **Amends Act 250 and Chapter 117 to provide relief from frivolous appeals**

S. 135 - **Tax Credits for Green Buildings**

Selected committee agenda items of interest to planners this week:

House Commerce Committee

Wednesday 9-12 **“Brownfields Report”- Public Hearing** Joint hearing with House Natural Resources and Senate Economic Development, Housing & Gen. Affairs Committees – Room 11.

Thursday 2Pm **H.334 Discontinuance of Ancient Roads** [11 witnesses signed up including VT Title Insurers, Assn, VT Bankers’ Assn, Real Estate Assn, VLCT]

House Government Operations Committee

Wednesday 9 AM **H.28 Guidelines for Outdoor Lighting** – Tom Torti ANR; Tasha Wallis BGS; Deb Sachs VPA; Mike Munson; Brad Vietje VT Astronomical Society; Gabe Arnold VEIC; Rep Joe Krawczyk Bennington SelectBoard.

Thursday 10-12 **H.12 Municipal Regulation of Amateur Radio Antennae** Fred Messer WA1LIE ; Michael Gruteke; Karen Horn VLCT; Mark Metayer DPS

House Natural Resources & Energy Committee

-Tuesday 2:30 - 3:30 PM **H.187 Municipal Authority to Enforce Against Illegal Burning of Solid Waste** - Anne Whiteley ANR and Al Boright Leg Counsel.

Still mostly working on energy issues this week, notably on Thursday - **S. 52 Renewable Portfolio Standards** Wed afternoon, all Thursday and Friday Am

Friday 1-2 PM **H. 177 Act 250 Exemption of Leased Land that is the site of Farming** Steve Kerr, Ag Agency and Mike Zahner Nat. Res Bd.

House and Senate Transportation Committees

Thursday 10:30 Am Ethan Allen Room **“Rail Discussion”**

Senate Agriculture Committee

Tuesday 8 – 9:30 Am **Ag Lands Mitigation** – Mike Zahner, Nat Res Bd ; Jean Richardson; Steve Kerr Ag Agency and Al Boright Leg Counsel.

Senate Natural Resources & Energy Committee
Tuesday 10:30 am – and Wednesday 9am **S.84 Mercury**
Wednesday 10:15-11:15 **S.56 ANR Restructuring**

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