

To: Vermont House of Representatives, Committee on Transportation

From: The Vermont Local Roads Program

Dear Representatives,

Upon hearing about the proposed restructuring of the Vermont Local Roads Program within the Agency of Transportation last Friday, February 21 our program informed each Vermont Town of these proposed changes to the best of our ability using email. What follows are email responses in support of keeping the program in its current structure at Saint Michael's College, and additional names of those willing to provide testimony before the Legislature. These are the responses we received in this brief window of time and will update this document as more responses are received. These are screen shots from email responses.

---

**Re: Vermont Local Roads Program, Proposed Restructuring Within VTrans**

Delsie Hoyt <delsie@kingdommoonrugs.com>

 You forwarded this message on 2/22/2014 8:46 AM.

Sent: Sat 2/22/2014 8:37 AM

To: Wells, Erik A

---

Erik,

I'd be happy to do what I can for you folks. I've found your services invaluable for West Fairlee. We're small, but as a Selectboard Chair you are one of the services I most rely on. Recently, we received technical services in the form of a paving engineer (Andy Legg) to assess and prioritize our backlog of paving needs. His work for us was amazing and provided the detail that we needed for long-term planning and most of all, budgeting. His work gave our Selectboard credibility and I cite it every chance I get.

In general, I've found VTrans reluctant to get into the nuts and bolts of road and bridge projects. They'll come take a look but don't want to "put themselves on the line" in disseminating/suggesting new technologies or ballparking/estimating costs for project. In large part, I think this is due to the hierarchy of the whole VTrans system -- working for the State, if you will, rather than the Town.

You are my "go to" resource for roads. I always scan your newsletter for tidbits (from technical paving webinars to tree programs passed along to our Conservation Commission). and other towns' contributions to the listserv. Even on the District level, it has been difficult for us to compete for attention and get the advice/feedback tailored to our situation.

I think Vermont needs an "independent" training and technical assistance resource; and you folks are doing a great job!

Good luck with this, let me know how I can help.

Delsie Hoyt, Chair  
West Fairlee Selectboard

**Re: Vermont Local Roads Program, Proposed Restructuring Within VTrans**

Bruce Hoar <bhoar@willistonvt.org>

 You replied to this message on 2/22/2014 1:46 PM.

Sent: Sat 2/22/2014 8:36 AM

To: Wells, Erik A

---

Eric,

This is not the first time that VTRANS has come up with this. They had a few of us come to Montpelier about 7year ago when they were thinking of moving the program while Hank was still involved. I certainly do no agree with this as I see the need for both types of service. Let me know what I can do to help and maybe able ti speak on behalf of the VMHA board.

Bruce

Sent from my iPad

**RE: Vermont Local Roads Program, Proposed Restructuring Within VTrans**

Cindi Jones <cjones@warrenvt.org>

 You replied to this message on 2/24/2014 8:13 AM.

Sent: Mon 2/24/2014 8:07 AM

To: Wells, Erik A

---

Erik,

I do not think that this merge is in the best interest of the Towns. It appears like more state control and the services would not be as complete as what VT Local Roads offers currently. The district services under VTRANS has specific areas that they work with Towns on and to merge these two would cause more confusion and lack of services to the Towns. VT Local Roads provides classes and technical assistance at members request and VT Local Road also know what the Towns are up against with state requirements. I also see that the technical assistance would be more at the state level of requirements and the various classes would not be as personal to what the towns actually do with what they have for budgets.

I would like to see the state reasoning for this change? Perhaps they feel that they do not have the control over towns in this area and now want to take that control.

Just my own comments and experience from working with VT Local Roads.

Cindi Jones  
Town of Warren  
PO Box 337  
Warren, VT 05674  
802-496-2709 x23

**RE: Vermont Local Roads Program, Proposed Restructuring Within VTrans**

Sara <mendonadmin@comcast.net>

You replied to this message on 2/24/2014 11:33 AM.

Sent: Mon 2/24/2014 11:29 AM

To: Wells, Erik A

---

Erik-

Add me to the list of supporters of the current VT Local Roads Program. Unfortunately, I am not available Tuesday, but can be available to answer any questions committee members have.

I support the educational resources available through VT Local Roads for both management and road commissioners. I have also expressed to our District 3 administrator that I support making the VTRANS technical assistance positions permanent. However, I didn't realize how the proposed bill was stated and how it eliminated the VT Local Roads Program as it is established today. This I do not support.

As a small municipality, we rely on the resources we receive from VT Local Roads and keeping us informed of the ever changing regulations that we must follow. The program is our "go to" source for information about roads.

The reason I support the TA positions is that I feel it would be beneficial to have more technical assistance from VTRANS as it is stated in the Orange Book and should be available to us. Codes and Standards and ANR regulations truly escalate our projects from simple to complex. Projects quickly escalate beyond our expertise and enter a world that requires technical assistance or engineering. Small municipalities do not have this expertise and can't afford the engineering. For example, we have a culvert inventory, it is up to date and it identifies which culverts are in poor condition. The jump from this information to budgeting appropriately for their replacement, meeting VTRANS and ANR regulations, and having an appropriate document that we can go out to bid with in order to compare bids apples to apples is where we lack the expertise. Most Road Commissioners for small municipalities are working Road Commissioners and spend most of their time out on the roads. They are not paperwork pushers and they are not engineers. We need help looking at our upcoming projects and helping us determine a solution that will meet codes and standards and ANR regulations and develop an RFP. Hiring an engineer is overkill.

I do see an overlap of resources. When I have a question, I often have to think, should I call VTRANS District 3, our Regional Planning Commission, VT Local Roads or VLCT. Sometimes we can get the answer from more than one organization and sometimes we get the right answer from one organization and the wrong answer from another.

Good Luck!

Sara

**Proposed changes to Vermont Local Roads Program in FY '15  
Transportation Bill**

Katie Reilley <newhavenhighway@gmavt.net>

Sent: Mon 2/24/2014 11:59 AM

To: Wells, Erik A; fcerulli@leg.state.vt.us

Cc: rboise@gmavt.net

---

Erik,

As a highway staff person who regularly is in contact with the Vermont Local Roads Program (VLRP) staff, I cannot support the proposed restructuring of the VLRP as defined in the 2014 Transportation Bill. With minimal staff, VLRP covers the entire state with educational programs and materials to assist municipal highway staff, giving them opportunities to improve their job performance and reduce costs to the municipality.

In addition, working with the VLRP staff has been very positive:

- Program materials are regularly distributed;
- emails are answered promptly;
- workshops are effective, interesting and educational; and
- focus is placed squarely on the municipalities of Vermont.

It is risky to assume that this program can be shifted from an educational institution to an agency of state government and still maintain its effectiveness. Please support the leaving the VLRP as it currently exists.

Thank you for your consideration.

Katie Reilley  
Highway Department Staff  
New Haven, VT  
453 3516

## **FW: Vermont Local Roads Program, Proposed Restructuring Within VTrans**

Bill Bryant <wbryant@madriver.net>

 You replied to this message on 2/24/2014 12:25 PM.

Sent: Mon 2/24/2014 12:24 PM

To: Wells, Erik A

---

Hi Eric,

This sounds like a classic case of “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” I have not been closely involved with the Local Roads program in a number of years, but I am probably one of the few town administrator’s to have completed the Road Scholar Program – that was back in the mid-90s when Hank was still director. It was a selectboard member who was a VTrans engineer when I worked for East Montpelier who encouraged me to attend the program. While I am still far from an engineer nor ready to go out and plow snow, as a result of the program I have been able to better understand road issues, support my road departments, and been able to explain road matters to citizens.

I have always encouraged my road crews to attend the seminars and have had employees trained on site with equipment such as graders. I have called upon the program on a number of occasions, including using Steve Jerome as an expert in analyzing a drainage issue that our foreman and I were being sued about in small claims court. I have always had a good working relationship with various folks at VTrans, but for the life of me I can see no good reason to move Vermont Local Roads into the biggest bureaucracy in Vermont. The Vermont Local Roads is about LOCAL road operations – it should remain in a place where it is independent and where it responds primarily to the needs of its primary constituents – local road departments.

Please let me know if there is anything I can do to help as this issue develops.

Bill Bryant  
Bristol Town Administrator  
(and formerly Town Administrator for Waitsfield 1989 to 2006 and East Montpelier 1991 to 1999)

**Additional Municipal Supporters Willing to Testify to Retain VLR's Current Structure:**

- The Town of Calais Selectboard, Denise Wheeler, Chair
- Floyd Sheesley, Operations Manager, Town of Colchester DPW
- Byron Hathaway, Road Commissioner, Town of Rutland
- Adam Cate, Operations Manager, City of South Burlington
- Brent Smith, Highway Foreman, Town of Groton
- Darlene Butler, Highway Department, Town of Hubbardton

**Emails of Support Included are From:**

- Delsie Hoyt, Selectboard Chair, Town of West Fairlee
- Bruce Hoar, Director of Public Works, Town of Williston
- Cindi Jones, Town Administrator, Town of Warren
- Sara Tully, Town Administrator, Town of Mendon
- Katie Reilley, Highway Department, Town of New Haven
- Bill Bryant, Town Administrator, Town of Bristol