

Senate Government Operations Committee

Municipal Toolbox Bill 2014

April 2, 2014

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you this afternoon.

VLCT worked with the Wenate Government Operations Committees to pass a municipal technical corrections bill that addresses municipal statutes that are unclear or obsolete or have unintended consequences and where changes to them are not expected to be controversial.

S. 168 addresses the following issues.

- (Sec. 1) Strike the provision for an elected animal control officer. 13 VSA §351 (4). This also is in Section 4 where the language should reflect eliminating the elected animal control officer but retaining the appointed animal control officer.
- (Sec. 2) Establish that a municipality may regulate the Licensing of dogs in 24 VSA § 2291 (10), 20 VSA 3549, 20 VSA 3550.
- (Sec. 3) Provide for a municipality to adopt ordinances imposing greater penalties than statute allows. (\$500 per violation). Please note that in this section we need to replace “kennel permit” with “pet dealer permit”.
- (Sec. 5) Eliminate the election of the “Collector of Current Taxes”. Current taxes are almost always paid to the Treasurer. The only towns in the state that we know of that elect the tax collector are Mt. Tabor and Groton. The terms tax collector and delinquent tax collector are frequently confused. If this language were to pass, those elected officers would serve until the next town meeting is held.
- (Sec. 6) Provide for a municipality to appoint a collector of delinquent taxes. Right now a town may only elect a collector of delinquent taxes.
- (Sec. 7) Add language to incompatible offices statute that a cemetery commissioner may not be treasurer. Cemetery commissioners handle money and so the separation of responsibility is a best practice.
- (Sec. 8) Provide that municipalities with governance charters have same authority to appoint advisory commissions as those towns governed by general

statute. Establish functions and scope of advisory commissions at local legislative body level.

- (Sec. 9) Make explicit that planning commissions may have alternates (24 VSA § 4460 (c)).
- (Sec. 10) Deletes reference to Class 4 roads in planning statute - please see attached explanation from VT Planners' Association.
- (Sec. 11) Require house or other building owners to affix E-911 number to the structure, sign or number post clearly visible from the highway.
- In order for Vermonters to qualify for maximum disaster assistance payments from FEMA when a disaster is declared, municipal officers must be able to "declare a property to be destroyed". This was a significant issue in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Irene and a report from the Department of Housing and Community Development describes the need.