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MEMORANDUM

To: VLCT Board of Directors
From: Karen Horn
Director, Public Policy & Advocacy
Date: March 12, 2009
RE: Regionalization Part II

The discussion of regionalization of various services continues with respect to schools; regarding transit services, police services and stormwater infrastructure maintenance; and as a mechanism for enabling effective clean energy districts. The legislature is not likely to take up the issue this year and leadership has not seemed particularly interested to date.

However, the discussion is continuing less formally. Steve and I met with the School Boards and Superintendents' advocacy staff yesterday to talk about how we might flesh out a concept that is workable for local governments on both the school and municipal sides. The two core questions in reorganizing local government are,

How do you assure or enhance effective self-governance in larger regional governance entities?

How do you create an efficient system for delivery of services to a region from the local government level instead of imposing it from the top?

Below please find some further information on this issue.

State Wide Transit Authority Legislation

H 397 was introduced by Representative Minter to establish a statewide transit authority as an instrumentality of the state, with "all public transit facilities that are owned and operated by public agencies, authorities or instruments of the state, or any combination of these entities", conveyed to the authority. The authority would be enabled to establish, levy, and collect fares, tolls, rentals, rates, charges and other fees, but not taxes it seems.

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We do not expect this bill to progress in the time left in this session but it is there to spark discussion next year.

Law Enforcement Budgets in Washington County

We reviewed actual and proposed budgets for 2009, 2010 in Washington County for law enforcement services. We found budgets for Barre City, Barre

Town, Berlin, Calais, Fayston, Middlesex, Montpelier, Moretown, Northfield, Plainfield, Warren, Waterbury Town and Waterbury Village. The usual difficulties with respect to calendar or fiscal years budgets are inherent in the figures here, however the combined budgets for these municipalities is \$6,372,415. That does include amounts paid to the county sheriff by Fayston, Moretown, and Warren. It does not include any figures for the towns of Cabot, East Montpelier, Marshfield or Roxbury.

The population of Washington County in 2007 according to Census estimates was 58,926. Thus in Washington County at least \$108 is spent per capita. By contrast, the City of Burlington request for police department support in FY 09 was \$8,763,671 according to the budget on their website. Burlington's population according to Census estimates in 2007 was 38,531. In Burlington, \$227 per capita was spent on police services. Another example is Barre City, where the FY 10 proposal for police services was \$2,211,072 and the 2007 Census population is 8905. The cost per capita in Barre City is \$248.

We know that these figures are crude and do not take into account consideration of special circumstances such as large populations of persons under the Department of Corrections' supervision, or grants that might offset some of those dollars. The question posed by the VLCT Board was would it make sense to combine all Washington County dollars spent on police services and cover the entire county.

Island of Montreal

The Island of Montreal, included 28 independent municipalities until 2001, which formed the Montreal Urban Community (MUC). On January 1, 2002 27 municipalities were merged with the City of Montreal, part of a merger of municipalities across Quebec organized and implemented by the Parti Quebecois. The merged city of Montreal was divided into 27 boroughs (not necessarily coincident with the boundaries of the former municipalities) that were responsible for local administration. The larger city took responsibility for larger matters such as economic development and transportation. The concept was not only that the new merged municipality would be organized more efficiently but also that it would have more clout relative to other cities in Canada, such as Toronto.

The merger set off a firestorm of controversy in merged municipalities, particularly on the Island of Montreal. In addition to all the usual imaginable uproar, primarily English speaking municipalities were merged with primarily French speaking municipalities, raising fears that English-speaking residents would lose their linguistic rights.

Fifteen merged municipalities on the Island of Montreal appealed to the Court of Appeal of Quebec to no avail. In 2003, the Liberal Party defeated the Parti Quebecois. The Liberal Part allowed referendums in merged municipalities to "demerge". Those elections took place in June 2004 and 15 of the previously independent municipalities demerged in 2006. As a result the original City of Montreal and 12 previously independent municipalities are now the City of Montreal, organized into 19 arrondissements.

Even though the 15 municipalities secured their independence again, many powers remain with a joint board, the Montreal Agglomeration Council, covering the entire island of Montreal, in which the City of Montreal is the strongest voice. The controversy continues to rage about whether or not the tradeoff of independence for efficiency would be worth it.

Parliament imposed a similar merger in New Zealand in the 1980s with the result that New Zealand has 73 territorial authorities today, each of which has authority for several former municipalities. There was no demerger there.

Note on Shire Model

The shire model, described in the Vermont Papers, by Frank Bryan and John McLaughry is a concept used in England, but proposed for the first time in the United States in this book. Professor Bryan asked me to clarify that although the Vermont Papers proposal anticipates that many current state responsibilities would be transferred to the shire, many others would remain at the state for reasons of both consistency and efficiency. Human services would be one area that remains largely at the state level.