

**Sunset Advisory Commission  
Board and Commission Review**

The Commission reviews every State board and commission and takes testimony regarding whether each board or commission should continue to operate or be eliminated and whether the powers and duties of any board or commission should be revised. Each board and commission has the burden of justifying its continued operation.

The Commission also reviews whether members of a board or commission should be entitled to a per diem and, if so, the amount of that per diem.

In testifying before the Commission, you should be able to provide the following information:

1. In general, how often does the board and commission meet? Provide specific information on how often the board or commission has met in the past two fiscal years. Provide information on where agendas and minutes of meetings can be found.

**Response: The Vermont Transportation Authority has been inactive since the late 1990s/early 2000s, when it was briefly reactivated for possible involvement with the Charlotte-Burlington Commuter Train Demonstration Project.**

2. Provide the names of members of the board or commission, their term length and expiration, their appointing authority, and the amount of any per diem they receive.

**Response: N/A.**

3. Provide an overview of the board or commission's purpose.

**Response: The VTA was created by Act No. 14 of 1973. Its original purpose was to implement the State's acquisition and rehabilitation of the St. Johnsbury & Lamoille County Railroad between St. Johnsbury and Swanton. However, in Sec. 6 of Act No. 182 of 1974, the Legislature transferred all the VTA's assets and contracts to the Public Service Board (PSB), which already was responsible for administering the other State -owned railroad lines (Bennington-Burlington and Bellows Falls-Rutland). The VTA then became inactive for the first time. In 1976, the newly created Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) took over from the PSB the responsibility for administering all the State-owned railroad properties, including the St. Johnsbury-Swanton line (now the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail).**

**In Sec. 14 of Act No. 18 of 1999, the Legislature briefly reactivated the VTA for a possible supporting role for the Charlotte-Burlington Commuter Train Demonstration Project. However, the VTA's services turned out not to be needed and the commuter train demonstration project, during its short life, was overseen by VTrans.**

4. Is that purpose still needed? What would happen if the board or commission no longer fulfilled that purpose?

**Response: Although there is no immediate need for the VTA, it is possible that its broad enabling legislation (codified at 19 V.S.A. Chapter 16) could be useful in the**

**future should the Legislature again determine that a “public authority” approach is an appropriate tool to finance, construct, or operate one or more transportation facilities or services.**

5. How well is the board or commission performing in executing that purpose? What evidence can you provide to substantiate that performance?

**Response: N/A (VTA has been inactive for 15 or so years).**

6. If the purpose is still needed, can State government be more effective and efficient if the purpose was executed in a different manner?

**Response: This is a difficult question to answer, given that states are constantly exploring new ways for delivering transportation projects and operating transportation facilities.**

7. If the purpose is still needed, do any of your board or commission’s functions overlap or duplicate those of another State board or commission or federal or State agency? If so, is your board or commission still the best entity to fulfill the purpose?

**Response: As explained above, the functions briefly exercised by the VTA now are performed by VTrans.**

8. Does the board or commission’s enabling law continue to correctly reflect the purpose and activities of the board or commission?

**Response: Although originally enacted in 1973, the VTA’s enabling legislation (codified at 29 V.S.A. Chapter 16) is quite modern and comprehensive. If some future Legislature were to decide to reactivate the VTA, then 29 V.S.A. § 730 (Authorized projects) might need to be updated to reflect the new tasks assigned.**

9. Provide a list of the board and commission’s last fiscal year expenditures including staffing costs. How are these funded?

**Response: N/A.**

10. Is the board or commission required by law to prepare any reports or studies for the Legislature, the Governor, or any State agency or officer? If so, have those reports or studies been produced? Does the board or commission have ongoing reporting obligations?

**Response: Yes; see 29 V.S.A. § 735 (Annual report; audit). Because the VTA has been inactive since the early 2000s, there are no recent reports or audits.**