

Dear Rep. Copeland Hanzas,

On behalf of our client Connecticut Attorneys Title Insurance Corporation I am part of a group of stakeholders consisting of representatives of VLCT, the VT Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Association, the VT Bar Association, the VT Bankers Association and the VT Realtor's Association that is working on developing a proposal for the funding of an initiative to get Vermont's land records online. The Senate Government Operations committee has "blessed" this undertaking per the attached email from Senator White. Tanya Marshall from the Secretary of State's office is facilitating meetings of this group.

I am told that the House Appropriations Committee (HAC) is going to be developing one or more spending bills relative to the use of the federal CARES Act monies the state has received, and that those bill(s) will be separate from the two FY2021 budget bills (the three month spending bill and the nine month spending bill) HAC is/will also be developing. It is my further understanding that the House's policy committees have been instructed to submit proposals to HAC by next Wednesday, 6/10, regarding activities/projects they feel should be funded with the CARES Act monies.

Accordingly, I am writing you to broach the idea of your committee recommending to HAC that a sum of money be appropriated in what I will call the "CARES monies bill(s)" for the purpose of getting Vermont's land records online. The appropriation would be to the Secretary of State's office.

Working with third party vendors a number of Vermont municipalities already have the documents filed for recording in their land records after various dates online. The stakeholder group's thinking is that what we should do is build upon what is already happening in some municipalities by providing funding to get the other municipalities' land records online. The goal would be to get records online on a prospective basis (e.g., have documents filed for recording after a certain date scanned and uploaded to an online accessible database) and, in order to be meaningful, also get records that have been filed in the land records in the past scanned and uploaded. How far back in time the instruments that are already in the land records would be scanned and uploaded would depend on the amount of funding, but ideally it would be in the range of at least 40 to 60 years. The Secretary of State's office would use the appropriated monies to help what I will call the "non online towns" purchase the equipment and retain the vendors necessary to get their land records online. The "on line towns" would also need assistance in getting their "back land records" online.

At this point we are roughly estimating that it would cost \$3.5 million to get towns online on a prospective basis. An additional sum of money would be needed for getting "back land records" online.

Please let me know your ideas on the foregoing. If you think it is a worthy idea we are willing to work with you and your committee to flesh this idea out so it can be presented to HAC.

Respectfully—Chuck Storrow

Charles Storrow, Partner
Leonine Public Affairs, LLP
1 Blanchard Court, Suite 101
Montpelier, VT 05602
Cell: (802) 371-7863 – Direct Office: 802-552-4470

chuck@leoninepublicaffairs.com
<http://www.leoninepublicaffairs.com/>