

Good morning Senators White, Clarkson & Pollina,

Regarding H.948, which was voted out of your committee yesterday and is now (I understand) headed to the floor to be reported by Sen. Pollina, the Tax Department is requesting that the committee (or an individual Senator) consider supporting/proposing a floor amendment to this bill.

The requested amendment would essentially allow the Tax Department's property value hearing officers the same flexibility allowed to municipalities (and their various Boards) during the state of emergency.

We respectfully request that the following language (which closely follows the language already in the bill) be used in this suggested floor amendment:

(c) Notwithstanding any provision of the law to the contrary, during a declared state of emergency under 20 V.S.A. chapter 1 due to COVID-19, Property Valuation Hearing Officers assigned by the Director of Property Valuation and Review pursuant to chapter 131 of Title 32 are authorized to conduct hearings pursuant to that chapter via electronic means and to establish reasonable procedures for the submission of documentary evidence prior to the hearing.

(d) Notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. 4467, during a declared state of emergency under 20 V.S.A. chapter 1 due to COVID-19, Property Valuation Hearing Officers assigned by the Director of Property Valuation and Review pursuant to chapter 131 of Title 32 shall not be required to physically inspect any property that is the subject of an appeal. The property owner shall provide photos of the interior of the property under appeal. Exterior Inspections may be conducted independently by the Hearing Officer or at the discretion of the Hearing Officer following appropriate social distancing protocols.

We sincerely apologize for the late introduction of this concept and language, and appreciate your consideration of this request.

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