



**Senate Natural Resources Committee  
Testimony  
January 25, 2019**

Thank you for the opportunity to tell you about the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) and give you an overview of the issues affecting local governments that are in your committee's jurisdiction.

**VLCT**

We are an association of all 246 cities and towns in the state. We provide technical assistance and education to local officials; liability, unemployment and workers' compensation insurance; and advocacy for our members. Our membership adopts a municipal policy for a biennium that includes 28 separate policy sections. We follow approximately 300 bills over the course of a biennium - all those bills that potentially affect local governments. We write a legislative update every week that you are in session. It is available on our website by 2:00 on Fridays and in your (physical) mailboxes on Tuesdays.

You received our Municipal Priorities brochure with our Weekly Legislative Update in your mailbox two weeks ago. I sent the digital copy to your staff as well for posting.

We tend to spend a good chunk of time in your committee and this year should be no different.

**Act 250**

I was part of the Act 250 Commission group of advisors, attended several of their work sessions, the facilitated public involvement exercise in Burlington, and gave comments to the commission on several occasions as well as providing technical information and data from towns as requested. We are very concerned with some of the recommendations in the Act 250 Commission Report and would welcome the opportunity to testify on the legislation when it comes to your committee.

**Municipal Planning and Regulation**

Land use matters and the credence given to local planning efforts in state regulatory permit processes, as well as the frequent need to seek multiple permits to address the

same issues continue to be a grave concern. As well, the frequent efforts to exempt various uses from zoning regulation seem to never abate and we attempt to work with all entities seeking special consideration without abandoning the capacity for municipal citizens to implement their vision for their communities.

The requirements in Act 174 for regional and local energy plans are being addressed by many municipalities although there is not a list of certified municipal energy plans on the Public Service Department (PSD) website. We suggest there should be a running tally of those municipal energy plans that have been certified and those that have been denied on the PSD website.

### **Energy**

Cities and towns are committed to assuring that residents and businesses can increase energy efficiency and reduce energy consumption that results in lower overall costs, and to construction of renewable energy facilities that are scaled appropriately to the size of our communities and designed to serve those host communities.

### **Clean Water**

For decades we have been involved in the discussion about clean-up of the waters of the state and ways to fund the mandates imposed by state law and the Total Maximum Daily Loads for our waterways. We participated with an expansive group to propose a state wide water authority last year and we are committed to continuing those types of discussions.

### **Broadband/ Telecommunications**

We are very concerned about the inadequate broadband and telecommunications capacity in rural parts of the state, limitations that stymie efforts to grow the economies of our cities and towns or to provide reliable services for first responders across the state.

These are a few of the issues we follow in the State House that come to your committee. We look forward to working with you on them.

*Karen Horn, Director  
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