1	S.181
2	Introduced by Senator White
3	Referred to Committee on
4	Date:
5	Subject: Municipal government; regulatory provisions; police power of
6	municipalities; miscellaneous regulatory powers
7	Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to make
8	miscellaneous amendments related to the regulatory authority of municipal
9	corporations to:
10	(1) authorize the legislative body of a municipality to adopt ordinances
11	governing: the installation of sidewalks; the implementation of traffic-calming
12	measures; the location and installation of storm drains; property management
13	standards; the maintenance of vacant or blighted property; and the removal of
14	damaged or leaking boats from bodies of water;
15	(2) authorize municipalities to vote by Australian ballot to revert from
16	charter-specific authority to authority delegated in later-enacted general law;
17	elect nonresidents to town offices; add members to the municipal legislative
18	body; eliminate the office of constable; recall local officials; adopt a one
19	percent local options tax on sales, meals and alcoholic beverages, and rooms;

change the number of members that serve on an appropriate municipal panel;

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powers:

1	and authorize the legislative body to appoint a moderator, trustees of public
2	funds, or cemetery commissioners;
3	(3) authorize the legislative body of a municipality to establish the speed
4	limits on municipal highways; deem the office of a legislative body member
5	vacant if the member fails to attend the minimum number of meetings
6	established in an annual attendance policy; expend town cemetery funds for the
7	purpose of improvements on cemetery property; and require compliance with
8	other municipal permits prior to the final issuance of a building permit; and
9	(4) establish statutory provisions that may be used for the operation of
10	government in cases of emergency.
11 12	An act relating to authorizing miscellaneous regulatory authority for municipal governments
13	It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:
14	* * * Ordinance Authority Subject to Permissive Referendum * * *
15	Sec. 1. 24 V.S.A. § 2291 is amended to read:
16	§ 2291. ENUMERATION OF POWERS
17	For the purpose of promoting the public health, safety, welfare, and

convenience, a town, city, or incorporated village shall have the following

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premises within the municipality.

1	(1) To set off portions of public highways of the municipality for
2	sidewalks and bicycle paths and to regulate their installation and use.
3	* * *
4	(4) To regulate the operation and use of vehicles of every kind including
5	the power: to erect traffic signs and signals; to regulate the speed of vehicles
6	subject to 23 V.S.A. chapter 13, subchapter 12;, to implement traffic-calming
7	regulations, to regulate or exclude the parking of all vehicles; and to provide
8	for waiver of the right of appearance and arraignment in court by persons
9	charged with parking violations by payment of specified fines within a stated
10	period of time.
11	* * *
12	(6) To regulate the location, installation, maintenance, repair, and
13	removal of utility poles, wires and conduits, water pipes or mains, storm
14	drains, or gas mains and sewers, upon, under, or above public highways or
15	public property of the municipality.
16	* * *
17	(13) To compel the cleaning or repair of any premises that in the
18	judgment of the legislative body is dangerous to the health or safety of the
19	public and to establish property management standards applicable to all

* * *

1	(24) Upon the determination by a municipal building inspector, health
2	officer, or fire marshal that a building within the boundaries of the town, city,
3	or incorporated village is uninhabitable, vacant, or blighted, to recover all
4	expenses incident to the maintenance of the uninhabitable, vacant, or blighted
5	building with the expenses to constitute a lien on the property in the same
6	manner and to the same extent as taxes assessed on the grand list, and all
7	procedures and remedies for the collection of taxes shall apply to the collection
8	of those expenses; provided, however, that the town, city, or incorporated
9	village has adopted rules to determine the habitability of a building, including
10	provisions for notice in accordance with 32 V.S.A. § 5252(3) to the building's
11	owner prior to incurring expenses and including provisions for an
12	administrative appeals process.
13	* * *
14	(30) To remove abandoned or damaged and leaking boats from bodies
15	of water, provided that the boat is located within 100 feet of a shoreline within
16	the territorial limits of the municipality, and to seek damages against the owner
17	of the boat for the actual cost of removing the boat from the body of water.
18	* * * Municipal Authority Subject to Voter Approval * * *
19	Sec. 2. 17 V.S.A. § 2645a is added to read:

§ 2645a. CHARTERED MUNICIPALITIES; VOTE TO REVERT TO

AUTHORITY PROVIDED BY GENERAL LAW

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1	(a) A municipality may propose to cede specific authority granted by
2	charter and instead use municipal authority delegated in later-enacted general
3	law, provided that the proposal is approved by the voters at any annual or
4	special meeting warned for that purpose according to the procedures
5	established in this section.
6	(b) The proposal may be made by the legislative body of the municipality
7	or by petition of five percent of the voters of the municipality. The proposal
8	shall specifically identify and contain the later-enacted general law that the
9	municipality proposes to use in lieu of the charter provision.
10	(c) The proposal shall be filed as a public record in the office of the clerk of
11	the municipality at least 10 days before the first public hearing and be available
12	for public inspection or copying upon request.
13	(d) The legislative body of the municipality shall hold at least two public
14	hearings prior to the meeting to vote on the charter proposal. Notice of each
15	public hearing and of the annual or special meeting shall be given in
16	accordance with section 2641 of this chapter.
17	(e) Voting on a proposal shall be by Australian ballot.

1	Sec. 3. 17 V.S.A. § 2646a is added to read:
2	§ 2646a. TOWN OFFICERS; TOWN VOTE TO ALLOW ELECTION OF
3	NONRESIDENTS
4	(a) Notwithstanding section 2646 of this subchapter, a municipality may
5	propose to allow nonresidents to be elected as town officers. The proposal
6	must be approved by the voters at any annual or special meeting warned for
7	that purpose.
8	(b) The proposal may be made by the legislative body of the municipality
9	or by petition of five percent of the voters of the municipality. The proposal
10	shall identify the town office that may be filled by a nonresident. Voting on a
11	proposal shall be by Australian ballot.
12	Sec. 4. 17 V.S.A. § 2650 is amended to read:
13	§ 2650. ADDITIONAL LISTERS AND SELECTBOARD MEMBERS
14	* * *
15	(b) Additional selectboard members.
16	(1)(A) A town may vote at a special or annual town meeting to elect two
17	additional selectboard members for terms of either one or two years each.
18	* * *
19	(2)(A) If two or more additional selectboard member positions are
20	created, they shall be for terms of the same length, but if the terms of the new

positions are to be for two years, when the additional selectboard members are

1	first elected, one shall be elected the terms of the members shall be staggered,
2	with a member or members elected for one year and the other selectboard
3	member or members elected for two years.
4	* * *
5	Sec. 5. 17 V.S.A. § 2651a is amended to read:
6	§ 2651a. CONSTABLES; APPOINTMENT; REMOVAL; ELIMINATION
7	OF OFFICE
8	* * *
9	(d)(1) A town may vote by Australian ballot at an annual meeting to
10	eliminate the office of constable.
11	(2)(A) If a town votes to eliminate the office of constable, the
12	selectboard shall appoint a qualified law enforcement officer, who need not be
13	a resident of the town.
14	(B) The law enforcement officer appointed by the selectboard shall
15	have the same powers, discharge the same duties subject to 24 V.S.A. § 1936a,
16	proceed in the discharge thereof in the same manner, and be subject to the
17	same liabilities as are prescribed for constables.
18	(3) A vote to eliminate the office of constable shall remain in effect until
19	rescinded by majority vote of the registered voters present and voting at an
20	annual meeting warned for that purpose.

1	(4) The term of office of any constable in office on the date a town votes
2	to eliminate that office shall expire on the 45th day after the vote or on the date
3	upon which the selectboard appoints a law enforcement officer under this
4	subsection, whichever occurs first.
5	Sec. 6. 17 V.S.A. § 2668 is added to read:
6	§ 2668. RECALL OF LOCAL OFFICIALS
7	(a) Any elected municipal officer may be removed from office subject to
8	the procedure for voter-initiated petition contained in this section.
9	(b) A petition for a vote on the question of recalling an elected municipal
10	officer shall be signed by not less than 15 percent of the active registered
11	voters of the municipality and presented to the legislative body or the clerk of
12	the municipality.
13	(c) When a petition is submitted in accordance with subsection (b) of this
14	section, the legislative body shall call a special meeting within 60 days from
15	the date of receipt of the petition, or include an article in the warning for the
16	next annual meeting of the municipality if the annual meeting falls within the
17	60-day period, to determine whether the voters will remove the elected
18	municipal officer.
19	(d) When the petition is approved by a majority of the ballots cast at the
20	special or annual meeting, the elected municipal officer named in the petition
21	shall cease to hold the office.

1	(e) A vacancy resulting from the recall of an elected municipal officer shall
2	be filled pursuant to 24 V.S.A. chapter 33, subchapter 6.
3	(f) A recall petition shall not be brought against an individual elected
4	municipal officer more than once within any 12-month period.
5	Sec. 7. 24 V.S.A. § 138 is amended to read:
6	§ 138. LOCAL OPTION TAXES
7	(a) Local option taxes are authorized under this section for the purpose of
8	affording municipalities an alternative method of raising municipal revenues to
9	facilitate the transition and reduce the dislocations in those municipalities that
10	may be caused by reforms to the method of financing public education under
11	the Equal Educational Opportunity Act of 1997. Accordingly:
12	(1) the local option taxes authorized under this section may be imposed
13	by a municipality;
14	(2) a municipality opting to impose a local option tax may do so prior to
15	July 1, 1998 to be effective beginning January 1, 1999, and anytime after
16	December 1, 1998 a local option tax shall be effective beginning on the next
17	tax quarter following 90 days' notice to the Department of Taxes of the
18	imposition; and
19	(3) a local option tax may only be adopted by a municipality in which:
20	(A) the education property tax rate in 1997 was less than \$1.10 per
21	\$100.00 of equalized education property value; or

1	(B) the equalized grand list value of personal property, business
2	machinery, inventory, and equipment is at least ten percent of the equalized
3	education grand list as reported in the 1998 Annual Report of the Division of
4	Property Valuation and Review; or
5	(C) the combined education tax rate of the municipality will increase
6	by 20 percent or more in fiscal year 1999 or in fiscal year 2000 over the rate of
7	the combined education property tax in the previous fiscal year. [Repealed.]
8	(b) If the legislative body of a municipality by a majority vote
9	recommends, the voters of a municipality may, at an annual or special meeting
10	warned for that purpose, by a majority vote of those present and voting, assess
11	any or all of the following:
12	(1) a one percent sales tax;
13	(2) a one percent meals and alcoholic beverages tax;
14	(3) a one percent rooms tax.
15	* * *
16	Sec. 8. 24 V.S.A. § 4460 is amended to read:
17	§ 4460. APPROPRIATE MUNICIPAL PANELS
18	* * *
19	(c) In the case of an urban municipality or of a rural town where the
20	planning commission does not serve as the board of adjustment or the
21	development review board, members of the board of adjustment or the

1 development review board shall be appointed by the legislative body, the 2 number and terms of office of which shall be determined by the legislative 3 body subject to the provisions of subsection (a)(b) of this section. The 4 municipal legislative body may appoint alternates to a planning commission, a 5 board of adjustment, or a development review board for a term to be 6 determined by the legislative body. Alternates may be assigned by the 7 legislative body to serve on the planning commission, the board of adjustment, 8 or the development review board in situations when one or more members of 9 the board are disqualified or are otherwise unable to serve. Vacancies shall be 10 filled by the legislative body for the unexpired terms and upon the expiration 11 of such terms. Each member of a board of adjustment or a development 12 review board may be removed for cause by the legislative body upon written 13 charges and after public hearing. If a development review board is created, 14 provisions of this subsection regarding removal of members of the board of 15 adjustment shall not apply. 16 * * *

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(f) Notwithstanding subsections (b) and (c) of this section, a municipality may vote at an annual or special meeting to change the number of members that may be appointed to a board of adjustment or development review board.

1	(1) The proposal to change the number of members serving on a board
2	may be brought by the legislative body or by petition of five percent of the
3	voters of the municipality. Voting on a proposal shall be by Australian ballot.
4	(2) If the number of members on a board is reduced, the legislative body
5	shall determine which of the appointed members shall remain in office.
6	* * * Voter-Approved Authority to Appoint Moderator, Trustees of Public
7	Funds, and Cemetery Commissioners * * *
8	Sec. 9. 17 V.S.A. § 2646 is amended to read:
9	§ 2646. TOWN OFFICERS; QUALIFICATION; ELECTION
10	At the annual meeting, a town shall choose from among its registered voters
11	the following town officers, who shall serve until the next annual meeting and
12	until successors are chosen, unless otherwise provided by law:
13	(1) A moderator, unless the town has voted to authorize the selectboard
14	to appoint the moderator as provided in section 2651g of this chapter.
15	* * *
16	(7) A first constable, and if needed a second constable, unless the town
17	has voted to authorize the selectboard to appoint constables or has eliminated
18	the office as provided in section 2651a of this chapter. The terms of office of
19	the first and second constable elected or appointed shall be for one year unless
20	a town votes that they shall be elected or appointed for terms of two years.
21	When a town votes for a two-year term for the offices of first and second

1	constable, the two-year terms shall remain in effect until the town rescinds
2	them by a majority vote of the legal voters voting at an annual meeting, duly
3	warned for that purpose.
4	* * *
5	(12) A trustee of public funds if the town so votes, unless the town has
6	voted to authorize the selectboard to appoint the trustee of public funds as
7	provided in section 2651h of this chapter.
8	* * *
9	(14) A cemetery commissioner if the town so votes, unless the town has
10	voted to authorize the selectboard to appoint the cemetery commissioner as
11	provided in section 2651i of this chapter.
12	* * *
13	Sec. 10. 17 V.S.A. § 2651g is added to read:
14	§ 2651g. MODERATOR; APPOINTMENT; REMOVAL
15	(a)(1) A municipality may vote at an annual meeting to authorize the
16	legislative body to appoint the moderator.
17	(2) A moderator so appointed may be removed by the legislative body
18	for just cause after notice and hearing.
19	(b) A vote to authorize the legislative body to appoint the moderator shall
20	remain in effect until rescinded by the majority vote of the registered voters

1	present and voting at an annual or special meeting, duly warned for that
2	purpose.
3	(c) The term of office of a moderator in office on the date a municipality
4	votes to allow the legislative body to appoint a moderator shall expire
5	45 calendar days after the vote or on the date upon which the legislative body
6	appoints a moderator under this section, whichever occurs first, unless a
7	petition for reconsideration or rescission is filed in accordance with section
8	2661 of this title.
9	(d) The authority to authorize the legislative body to appoint the moderator
10	as provided in this section shall extend to all municipalities except those that
11	have a charter that specifically provides for the election or appointment of the
12	office of moderator.
13	Sec. 11. 17 V.S.A. § 2651h is added to read:
14	§ 2651h. TRUSTEES OF PUBLIC FUNDS; APPOINTMENT; REMOVAL
15	(a)(1) A municipality may vote at an annual meeting to authorize the
16	legislative body to appoint the trustees of public funds.
17	(2) A trustee of public funds so appointed may be removed by the
18	legislative body for just cause after notice and hearing.
19	(b) A vote to authorize the legislative body to appoint the trustees of public
20	funds shall remain in effect until rescinded by the majority vote of the

1	registered voters present and voting at an annual or special meeting, duly
2	warned for that purpose.
3	(c) The term of office of a trustee in office on the date a municipality votes
4	to allow the legislative body to appoint the trustees of public funds shall expire
5	45 calendar days after the vote or on the date upon which the legislative body
6	appoints a trustee under this section, whichever occurs first, unless a petition
7	for reconsideration or rescission is filed in accordance with section 2661 of this
8	title.
9	(d) The authority to authorize the legislative body to appoint the trustees of
10	public funds as provided in this section shall extend to all municipalities except
11	those that have a charter that specifically provides for the election or
12	appointment of the trustees of public funds.
13	Sec. 12. 17 V.S.A. § 2651i is added to read:
14	§ 2651i. CEMETERY COMMISSIONERS; APPOINTMENT; REMOVAL
15	(a)(1) A municipality may vote at an annual meeting to authorize the
16	legislative body to appoint cemetery commissioners.
17	(2) A cemetery commissioner so appointed may be removed by the
18	legislative body for just cause after notice and hearing.
19	(b) A vote to authorize the legislative body to appoint the cemetery
20	commissioners shall remain in effect until rescinded by the majority vote of the

1	registered voters present and voting at an annual or special meeting, duly
2	warned for that purpose.
3	(c) The term of office of a cemetery commissioner in office on the date a
4	municipality votes to allow the legislative body to appoint the cemetery
5	commissioners shall expire 45 calendar days after the vote or on the date upon
6	which the legislative body appoints a commissioner under this section,
7	whichever occurs first, unless a petition for reconsideration or rescission is
8	filed in accordance with section 2661 of this title.
9	(d) The authority to authorize the legislative body to appoint the cemetery
10	commissioners as provided in this section shall extend to all municipalities
11	except those that have a charter that specifically provides for the election or
12	appointment of the cemetery commissioners.
13	* * * Authority of Legislative Body without Voter Approval * * *
14	Sec. 13. 23 V.S.A. § 1007 is amended to read:
15	§ 1007. LOCAL SPEED LIMITS
16	(a)(1) The legislative body of a municipality may establish, on the basis of
17	an engineering and traffic investigation, a speed limit on all or a part of any
18	city, town, or village highway within its jurisdiction, which:
19	(A) is not more than 50 miles per hour; however, after considering
20	neighborhood character, abutting land use, bicycle and pedestrian use, and
21	physical characteristics of the highways, the legislative body of a municipality

1	may vote to set the maximum speed limit, without an engineering and traffic
2	investigation, at not more than 50 miles per hour nor less than 35 miles per
3	hour, on all or a portion of unpaved town highways within its boundaries,
4	unless otherwise posted in accordance with the provisions of this section; or
5	(B) is not less than 25 miles per hour.
6	(2) If the legislative body of a municipality votes to set the speed limit
7	on all unpaved town highways in its boundaries at no more than 50 miles per
8	hour nor less than 35 miles per hour as provided for in subdivision (a)(1) of
9	this section, signs shall be located at points of change from one speed limit to
10	another.
11	* * *
12	Sec. 14. 24 V.S.A. § 961 is amended to read:
13	§ 961. VACANCY OR SUSPENSION OF OFFICER'S DUTIES
14	* * *
15	(e) When a member of a municipal legislative body fails to attend within a
16	one-year period the minimum number of meetings established by the
17	legislative body in an annual attendance policy, the member's office shall
18	become vacant. However, the member's office shall not be deemed vacant
19	pursuant to an attendance policy until the legislative body of the municipality
20	has warned a regular meeting for that purpose and affords the member the

opportunity to demonstrate that the absences were due to a reasonable basis

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date of its issue.

1	established in the attendance policy. An annual attendance policy may only be
2	established by unanimous resolution of the legislative body and shall be
3	renewed by the legislative body annually.
4	Sec. 15. 18 V.S.A. § 5361 is amended to read:
5	§ 5361. APPROPRIATIONS AND REGULATIONS BY TOWNS
6	A town may vote sums of money necessary for purchasing, holding,
7	improving, and keeping in repair suitable grounds and other conveniences for
8	burying the dead. The selectboard may make necessary regulations concerning
9	public burial grounds and for fencing and keeping the same in proper order.
10	Sec. 16. 24 V.S.A. § 3107 is amended to read:
11	§ 3107. CERTIFICATE OF PERMIT; FILING
12	(a) Before the construction or alteration of a building, the owner, builder, or
13	architect shall submit to the building inspector a comprehensive statement in
14	writing of the material to be used and the mode of construction of the proposed
15	building or alteration, with plans and specifications, if there are any. Work
16	thereon shall not be begun until the owner has received from the inspector a
17	certificate of permission specifying the material of which the outer walls and
18	other covering of the roof of such building are to be composed, the street upon
19	which, and the distance therefrom at which such building is to be placed. A

copy of such certificate shall be filed in the office of the inspector under the

1	(b) Such The certificate shall not be granted until the inspector is satisfied
2	that such the structure when completed will be properly built, and insofar as
3	practicable of a fireproof construction; provided. Provided, however, that in
4	those municipalities that have adopted the provisions of chapter 81 of this title,
5	relating to municipal zoning, the building inspector, before issuing said
6	building certificate, shall be satisfied that by the issuance of such certificate the
7	zoning ordinance of said municipality will not be violated:
8	(1) the issuance of the certificate or the building of the structure will not
9	violate a bylaw adopted by the municipality pursuant to chapter 117 of this
10	title; and
11	(2) the owner, builder, or architect has acquired any necessary municipal
12	permit or certificate related to sidewalks, water supply, sewer, building codes,
13	or signage.
14	Sec. 17. 1 V.S.A. § 312a is added to read:
15	§ 312a. MEETINGS OF PUBLIC BODIES; STATE OF EMERGENCY
16	(a) As used in this section:
17	(1) "Affected public body" means a public body:
18	(A) whose regular meeting location is located in an area affected by a
19	hazard; and
20	(B) that cannot meet in a designated physical meeting location due to
21	a declared state of emergency pursuant to 20 V.S.A. chapter 1.

1	(2) "Hazard" means an "all-hazards" as defined in 20 V.S.A. § 2(1).
2	(b) Notwithstanding subdivisions 312(a)(2)(D) and (c)(2) of this title,
3	during a declared state of emergency under 20 V.S.A. chapter 1:
4	(1) A quorum or more of an affected public body may attend a regular,
5	special, or emergency meeting by electronic or other means without
6	designating a physical meeting location where the public may attend.
7	(2) The members and staff of an affected public body shall not be
8	required to be physically present at a designated meeting location.
9	(3) An affected public body of a municipality may post any meeting
10	agenda or notice of a special meeting in two publicly accessible designated
11	electronic locations in lieu of the two designated public places in the
12	municipality, or in a combination of a designated electronic location and a
13	designated public place.
14	(c) When an affected public body meets electronically under subsection (b)
15	of this section, the affected public body shall:
16	(1) use technology that permits the attendance and participation of the
17	public through electronic or other means;
18	(2) whenever feasible, allow the public to access the meeting by
19	telephone; and

1	(3) post information that enables the public to directly access and
2	participate in meetings electronically and shall include this information in the
3	published agenda for each meeting.
4	(d) Unless unusual circumstances make it impossible for them to do so, the
5	legislative body of each municipality and each school board shall record any
6	meetings held pursuant to this section.
7	(e) An affected public body of a municipality shall continue to post notices
8	and agendas in or near the municipal clerk's office pursuant to
9	subdivision 312(c)(2) of this title and shall provide a copy of each notice or
10	agenda to the newspapers of general circulation for the municipality.
11	Sec. 18. 32 V.S.A. § 4404 is amended to read:
12	§ 4404. APPEALS FROM LISTERS AS TO GRAND LIST
13	* * *
14	(c)(1) The board shall meet at the time and place so designated, and on that
15	day and from day to day thereafter shall hear and determine such appeals until
16	all questions and objections are heard and decided. Each property, the
17	appraisal of which is being appealed, shall be inspected by a committee of not
18	less than three members of the board who shall report to the board within 30
19	days from the hearing on the appeal and before the final decision pertaining to
20	the property is given. If, after notice, the appellant refuses to allow an

inspection of the property as required under this subsection, including the

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1 interior and exterior of any structure on the property, the appeal shall be 2 deemed withdrawn. The board shall, within 15 days from the time of the 3 report, certify in writing its notice of decision, with reasons, in the premises, 4 and shall file such the notice with the town clerk who shall thereupon record 5 the same in the book wherein the appeal was recorded and forthwith notify the 6 appellant in writing of the action of such board, by certified mail. If the board 7 does not substantially comply with the requirements of this subsection and if 8 the appeal is not withdrawn by filing written notice of withdrawal with the 9 board or deemed withdrawn as provided in this subsection, the grand list of the 10 appellant for the year for which appeal is being made shall remain at the 11 amount set before the appealed change was made by the listers; except, if there 12 has been a complete reappraisal, the grand list of the appellant for the year for 13 which appeal is being made shall be set at a value that will produce a tax 14 liability equal to the tax liability for the preceding year. The town clerk shall 15 immediately record the same in the book wherein the appeal was recorded and 16 forthwith notify the appellant in writing of such the action, by certified mail. 17 Thereupon the appraisal so determined pursuant to this subsection shall 18 become a part of the grand list of such the person. 19

(2) During a declared state of emergency under 20 V.S.A. chapter 1, a board of civil authority within a municipality affected by an all-hazards event shall not be required to physically inspect any property that is the subject of an

1	appeal. If the appellant requests in writing that the property be inspected for
2	purposes of the appeal, a member or members of the board shall conduct the
3	inspection through electronic means. If the appellant does not facilitate the
4	inspection through electronic means, then the appeal shall be deemed
5	withdrawn.
6	(3) As used in this subsection, "electronic means" means the transmittal
7	of video or photographic evidence by the appellant at the direction of the board
8	members conducting the inspection.
9	(d) Listers and agents to prosecute and defend suits wherein a town is
10	interested shall not be eligible to serve as members of the board while
11	convened to hear and determine such appeals nor shall an appellant, his or her
12	servant, agent, or attorney be eligible to serve as a member of the board while
13	convened to hear and determine any appeals. However, listers and agents to
14	prosecute and defend suits wherein a town is interested shall be given the
15	opportunity to defend the appraisals in question.
16	Sec. 19. 32 V.S.A. § 4467 is amended to read:
17	§ 4467. DETERMINATION OF APPEAL
18	(a) Upon appeal to the Director or the court, the hearing officer or court
19	shall proceed de novo and determine the correct valuation of the property as
20	promptly as practicable and to determine a homestead and a housesite value if

a homestead has been declared with respect to the property for the year in

1	which the appeal is taken. The hearing officer or court shall take into account
2	the requirements of law as to valuation, and the provisions of Chapter I,
3	Article 9 of the Constitution of Vermont and the 14th Amendment to the
4	Constitution of the United States.
5	(b) If the hearing officer or court finds that the listed value of the property
6	subject to appeal does not correspond to the listed value of comparable
7	properties within the town, the hearing officer or court shall set said the
8	property in the list at a corresponding value. The findings and determinations
9	of the hearing officer shall be made in writing and shall be available to the
10	appellant.
11	(c)(1) If the appeal is taken to the Director, the hearing officer may inspect
12	the property prior to making a determination, unless one of the parties requests
13	an inspection, in which case the hearing officer shall inspect the property prior
14	to making a determination. Within 10 days of the appeal being filed with the
15	Director, the Director shall notify the property owner in writing of his or her
16	the Director's option to request an inspection under this section.
17	(2) During a declared state of emergency under 20 V.S.A. chapter 1, a
18	hearing officer shall not be required to physically inspect any property that is
19	the subject of an appeal. If the appellant requests in writing that the property
20	be inspected for purposes of the appeal, the hearing officer shall conduct the

inspection through electronic means. If the appellant does not facilitate the

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1	inspection through electronic means, then the appeal shall be deemed
2	withdrawn.
3	(3) As used in this subsection, "electronic means" means the transmittal
4	of video or photographic evidence by the appellant at the direction of the
5	hearing officer conducting the inspection.
6	Sec. 20. 24 V.S.A. § 5152 is added to read:
7	§ 5152. DISCONNECTIONS PROHIBITED; STATE OF EMERGENCY
8	(a) Notwithstanding this chapter or any provision of law to the contrary, a
9	municipality; a person who is permitted as a public water system pursuant to
10	10 V.S.A. chapter 56 and who provides another person water as a part of the
11	operation of that public water system; or a company engaged in the collecting,
12	sale, and distribution of water for domestic, industrial, business, or fire
13	protection purposes that is regulated by the Public Utility Commission under
14	30 V.S.A. § 203(3) shall be prohibited from disconnecting any person from
15	services during a declared state of emergency under 20 V.S.A. chapter 1,
16	provided that:
17	(1) the state of emergency is declared in response to an all-hazards event
18	that will cause financial hardship and the inability of ratepayers to pay for
19	water or sewer services; and
20	(2) the all-hazards event does not require the water or sewer service
21	provider to disconnect services to protect the health and safety of the public.

1	(b)(1) A violation of subsection (a) of this section by a municipality or a
2	person who is permitted as a public water system pursuant to 10 V.S.A.
3	chapter 56 may be enforced by the Agency of Natural Resources pursuant to
4	10 V.S.A. chapter 201.
5	(2) A violation of subsection (a) of this section by a company engaged
6	in the collecting, sale, and distribution of water for domestic, industrial,
7	business, or fire protection purposes that is regulated by the Public Utility
8	Commission under 30 V.S.A. § 203(3) may be enforced by the Public Utility
9	Commission pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 30.
10	(c) A ratepayer shall remain obligated for any amounts due to a water or
11	sewer service provider subject to this section. The ratepayer shall have a
12	minimum of 90 days after the end of the declared state of emergency to pay the
13	amounts due.
14	Sec. 21. 20 V.S.A. § 47 is added to read:
15	§ 47. MUNICIPAL DEADLINES, PLANS, AND LICENSES; EXTENSION
16	(a) During a state of emergency declared under this chapter, a municipal
17	corporation may:
18	(1) extend any statutory deadline applicable to municipal corporations,
19	provided that the deadline does not relate to a license, permit, program, or plan
20	issued or administered by the State or federal government; and

1	(2) extend or waive deadlines applicable to licenses, permits, programs,
2	or plans that are issued by the municipal corporation.
3	(b) During a state of emergency declared under this chapter, any expiring
4	license, permit, program, or plan issued by a municipal corporation that is due
5	for renewal or review shall remain valid for 90 days after the date that the
6	declared state of emergency ends.
7	* * * Repeal * * *
8	Sec. 22. REPEAL
9	19 V.S.A. § 312 (use of town highway funds) is repealed.
10	* * * Effective Date * * *
11	Sec. 23. EFFECTIVE DATE
12	This act shall take effect on July 1, 2022.