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To: Vermont House of Representatives  
Committee on Government Operations

From: Charity R. Clark, Chief of Staff  
Vermont Attorney General's Office

Date: January 20, 2021

Re: Background and statistics on Vermont Public Records Act (PRA) requests  
to the Attorney General's Office

In 2020, the Attorney General's Office (the "AGO") received 275 requests for records under the Vermont Public Records Act, 1 V.S.A. §§ 315-320. This is 118 more requests than in 2019. The requests came from a variety of people and entities, including members of the press, law firms, non-profits, individuals, and businesses. The AGO's case management software tracks the type of requester by assigning them one of three designations: "Firm" (for organizations, businesses, non-profits, law firms, universities, and the like), "Press," and "Citizen" (for individuals). In 2020, the breakdown of types of requesters was as follows:

Firm: 94 (up from last year's total of 71)  
Press: 52 (up from last year's total of 44)  
Citizen: 129 (up from last year's total 42)

Over the past year, the AGO received a PRA request more than every business day. The division that received the most requests was the General Counsel and Administrative Law Division (GCAL), which, for tracking purposes, includes the so-called "Front Office," consisting of the Attorney General, Deputy Attorney General, Chief of Staff, and Chief Assistant Attorney General. Combined, GCAL and the Front Office received 151 requests. The Public Protection Division, which includes the Consumer and Civil Rights Units, and the Consumer Assistance Program (CAP), which receives consumer complaints and employs a letter mediation program to help resolve these complaints, together received 85 requests for public records. Two other divisions that received significant numbers of requests are the Criminal Division (20 requests) and the Environmental Division received (19 requests).

Notably, in 2020, 49 of all PRA requests came from one individual, accounting for 17.8% of the total number of requests.

The AGO spent at least 190 hours responding to PRA requests.

The Attorney General's Office publishes all PRA requests, correspondence concerning requests, and documents produced on our website here: <https://ago.vermont.gov/open-government/>