



**Testimony to House Energy and Technology Committee
January 18, 2022
H. 518**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H. 518. We are tremendously grateful for the committee taking up this initiative. H. 518 is a bill that will put real targeted resources toward auditing municipal buildings and expanding the State Energy Management Program (SEMP) on energy efficiency improvements, renewable resources, and switching fuel sources to municipal buildings.

In 2019 and early 2020, VLCT discussed the potential for an expansion of the SEMP program to municipalities with Efficiency Vermont and the Department of Buildings and General Services (BGS). A locally focused program would have been welcomed then by municipalities, but lacked resources for implementation.

One of the biggest difficulties for towns historically has been where to start and what informational resources to trust. Also in 2019 and early 2020, VLCT did not see a path forward for our guiding implementation. H. 518 would change the conversation altogether and address the matters of reliable information, technical assistance, energy auditing of municipal buildings and most importantly, financing municipal heating system conversion projects. It would build on the successes of the Efficiency Vermont community level engagement and the state buildings SEMP program and its Green Revolving Investment Tracking System (GRITS*).

As well, with the successful deployment of the VLCT ARPA Assistance and Coordination Program, we are well situated to expand programming to helping with accessing funds from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and implementing recommendations of the Climate Action Plan.

VLCT has a list of municipal buildings that are insured by our Property Casualty and Intermunicipal Fund (PACIF), which I will send to the committee. It is the most comprehensive listing of municipal properties. Quite a few of the buildings are sheds which might require minimal heat, but many are buildings in which people work – town offices, town halls, recreation centers, libraries, public works garages and more. The list will give you an indication of the scope of the need.

With me this morning is Sarah Bruce, energy committee chair in Hartland. Her committee has been working on options for the library in Hartland, and she can give some perspective on the daunting costs and payback period for a town seeking to address a single building.

We are happy to work with the committee to secure passage of H. 518 and happy to answer questions.

*According to the BGS website, The GRITS tool makes it possible to: • Access and learn from the field-tested work of other institutions, • Facilitate investments in efficiency projects by enabling fund administrators to easily and clearly communicate with stakeholders, • Simplify calculations of project-specific carbon and financial savings on both annualized and estimated life-of-project timeframes, and • Create customized reports that tell the story of current and anticipated financial and environmental performance.