



TO: House Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Sue Ceglowski, Executive Director, Vermont School Boards Association

RE: Yield Bill - DR 22-0644 Draft 1.1

DATE: March 17, 2022

Good Morning. I am Sue Ceglowski, Executive Director for the Vermont School Boards Association. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the yield bill.

I reviewed the draft proposal Education Fund Outlook - March 2022 which is the basis for the yield bill and listened to the committee's discussions, so I have an understanding of how the committee arrived at the yields. I have also reviewed the bill itself.

As a statewide association, the VSBA is compelled to pay attention to all of the important policy considerations affecting schools. The VSBA Board looked at the Education Fund Outlook at its February meeting (the version that was available at that time). At that time, the Board members also had information on the Governor's proposal regarding the approximately \$90 million on the bottom line of the Education Fund.

The VSBA Board unanimously passed a motion that they supported using the amount on the bottom line of the Education Fund to invest in construction aid and Career and Technical Center education. Also of note: within their discussion, there was concern about how the state will address funding for PCB mitigation and remediation, which relates to construction aid and facilities.

I know the Committee doesn't have time for lengthy testimony this morning on the facilities needs of schools in Vermont but we wanted to make sure that the thinking of the VSBA Board (which consists of 23 school board members from geographically diverse regions of the State) was conveyed to the Committee.

We know there will be an opportunity in the future to have conversations with you about the state of school facilities in Vermont. And it's an important conversation because we believe school facilities have a direct impact on educational outcomes.

We appreciate the work the Legislature did last year in passing Act 72 (facilities bill) and look forward to the Secretary of Education's report, due on or before January 15, 2023, which will include (1) an analysis of the challenges and opportunities to the State of funding public school construction projects; (2) recommendations for a funding source for school construction projects that are linked to the inventory, needs, and conditions of all Vermont schools; and (3) an analysis of how other states are funding school construction projects.

Thank you.