

March 2025

Vermont League of Cities and Towns 2025 Legislative Priorities

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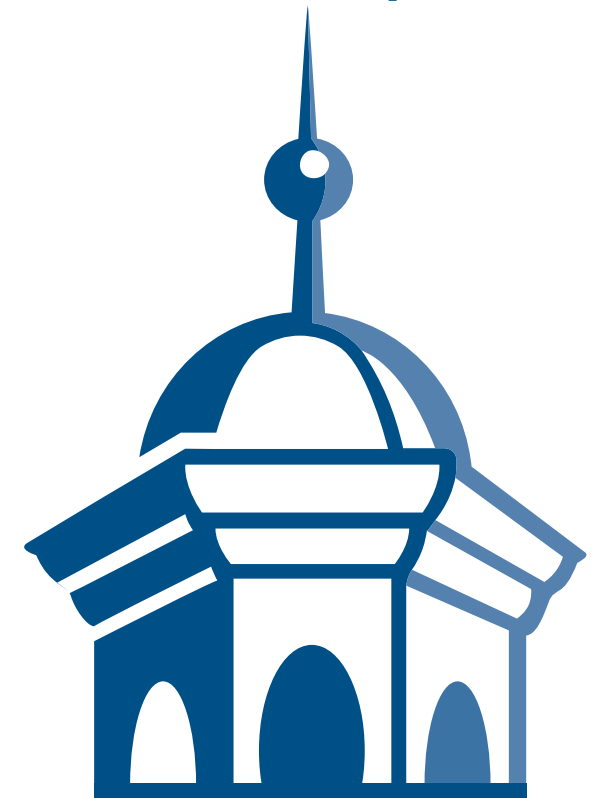
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What is VLCT?

Every city and town in Vermont, including yours, is a member of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT), the nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that was founded in 1967 to serve and strengthen Vermont local government. In addition to legislative advocacy, VLCT provides:

- Educational workshops for local officials
- Comprehensive insurance coverage for municipalities
- Confidential legal guidance from experienced municipal attorneys
- The Vermont Municipal Data Project
- Help for state agencies and legislative working groups



NEW Our Municipal Operations Support Team is funded by a \$1 million USDA RD grant to assist local officials with financial management, grant funding, ARPA, project development, and more

VLCT 2025 Legislative Priorities

Support municipalities in meeting the obligations and functions of today's local government and help them take action to solve the challenges of the 21st century.

2025

Support

Lower Property Taxes

Enable municipalities to raise local revenues and control expenses, avoid shifting state costs and obligations to local budgets.

Invest Locally

Provide reliable funding beyond competitive grants to municipalities to support the delivery of essential services, innovative programs, and the maintenance of public infrastructure.

Improve Accountability

Ensure transparency, fiscal responsibility, compliance, and equity across state and local government.

Action

Create Housing

Authorize new incentives and investment in infrastructure to support housing growth and create shelter, transitional housing, and services to address Vermont's homelessness crisis.

Promote Public Safety

Increase treatment options, law enforcement training opportunities, and judicial accountability.

Build Resilient Communities

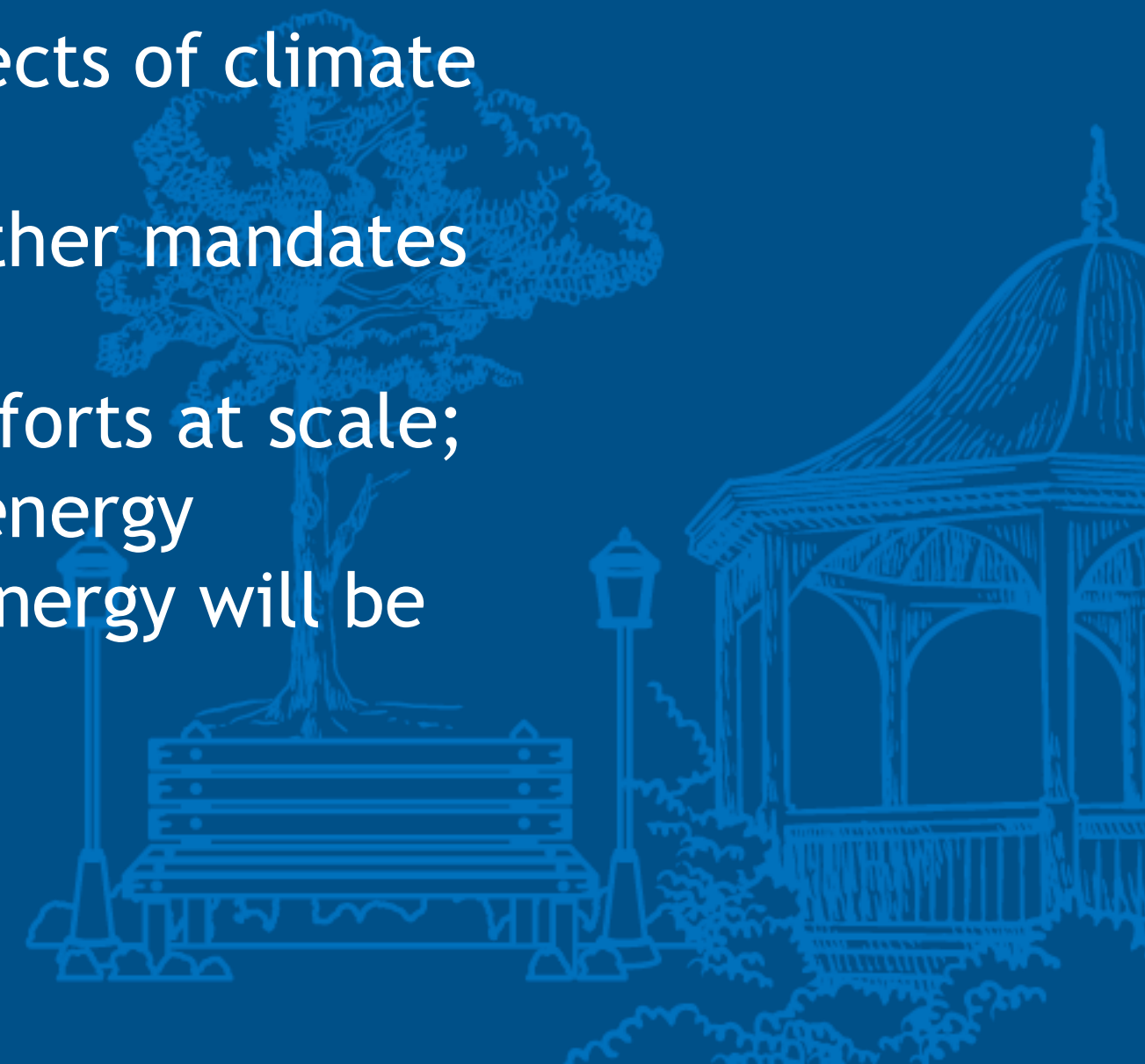
Work across government silos to address flood resiliency, water quality, sustainable growth, and the impacts of climate change.



VLCT Priorities Related to Energy and Technology

A 2025 priority of VLCT is to ensure local input and control over the siting and permitting of energy projects. Other policies related to E & T supported by VLCT members include:

- Base development decisions upon adopted municipal plans and use adopted regional plans as guidance documents;
- Implement policies that empower municipalities to reduce emissions across all sectors, plan for and increase resiliency to the effects of climate change, and transition to cleaner energy sources;
- Increase state energy code compliance without imposing further mandates or administrative burdens on municipalities;
- Provide accessible, low barrier funding for weatherization efforts at scale;
- Ensure local input and control over siting and permitting of energy projects, including decisions about building close to where energy will be used (close to load)



Act 174 and Enhanced Energy Plans

Act 174 of 2016 establishes a set of municipal and regional energy planning standards, which if met allow those plans to carry greater weight in the siting process for energy generation

- [Section 248](#) requires energy, gas, telecom, and water developers to obtain a Certificate of Public Good (CPG) from the Public Service Board
- Municipalities with Enhanced Energy Plans (EEPs) receive "substantial deference" with respect to local policies when the Board looks at the "orderly development" criterion
- Municipalities without zoning can (and do!) have EEPs. Zoning cannot regulate Section 248 projects. Municipalities can require permits & inspections for certain arrays.
- EEPs are evaluated by both the Department of Public and RPCs against the standards requires by Act 174.



Considerations for Suitable and Unsuitable Sites

Local land use planning and processes allow communities to envision and realize development that best leverages local resources and capacity, meets emerging needs and common goals, ensures equity, and protects natural resources. Good planning helps local government direct investment toward commonly beneficial public infrastructure.

- Conservation of natural resources and working lands
- Flood Plain Management
- Density goals for housing and/or commercial land uses
- Proximity to transmission
- Proximity to high energy burden neighborhoods, businesses
- Type of generation
- Location of existing generation
- Fire risk and local capacity for fire suppression



But What is a "setback" and what does it have to do with residential solar arrays?

A setback is a land use requirement that specifies a range of allowable distances between a property line and a structure in developed areas.

- Ensure access to the solar facility and surrounding structures for emergency services and to reduce fire risks (spread, suppression)
- Ensure adequate open space for pedestrians and to encourage adequate, healthy greenspace (urban heat, stormwater, pollinators, etc.)
- Ensure development does not create a nuisance or prohibit the productive, intended use of neighboring properties, structures, and public facilities



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Questions???



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- [Energy Planning Standards for Municipal Plans](#)
- [Act 174 FAQs](#)
- [Title 124, Chapter 177: Municipal and Regional Planning and Developments](#)
- [Vermont Municipal Planning Data Center](#)
- [Overview of Section 248 Process](#)
- [A list of Municipalities with Enhanced Energy Plans as of 2024](#) (120 Vermont municipalities)

