

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs to which
3 was referred House Bill No. 762 entitled “An act relating to the County and
4 Regional Governance Study Committee” respectfully reports that it has
5 considered the same and recommends that the bill be amended by striking out
6 all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

7 Sec. 1. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 118, Sec. 1 is amended to read:

8 Sec. 1. COUNTY AND REGIONAL GOVERNANCE STUDY
9 COMMITTEE; REPORT

10 (a) Legislative intent and ~~Creation~~ creation of Committee.

11 (1) Legislative intent. It is the intent of the General Assembly that
12 existing direct coordination and communication between the State and
13 Vermont municipalities should be retained or strengthened. County or regional
14 governance should enhance the work of local and State governments and not
15 become a procedural barrier between the State and municipalities.

16 (2) Creation of Committee. There is created the County and Regional
17 Governance Study Committee to address local government capacity
18 challenges, enhance and optimize public safety, regional collaboration and
19 planning, efficient, equitable, and transparent public resource allocation, and
20 effective regional public services for individuals and municipalities.

1 (b) Membership. The Committee shall be, to the extent possible, composed
2 of members from geographically diverse regions of the State. The Committee
3 shall elect its chair from among its members. The Committee shall be
4 composed of the following members:

5 (1) three current members of the House of Representatives, who shall
6 not all be from the same political party, ~~the first of whom shall be the Chair of~~
7 ~~the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, and the~~
8 ~~second and third of whom~~ shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House; and

9 (2) three current members of the Senate, who shall not all be from the
10 same political party, ~~the first of whom shall be the Chair of the Senate~~
11 ~~Committee on Government Operations, and the second and third of whom~~
12 shall be appointed by the Committee on Committees.

13 (c) Powers and duties.

14 (1) The Committee shall study and make recommendations to the
15 General Assembly on how to improve the structure and organization of county
16 and regional government, including:

17 (A) ~~enhancement~~ coordination and optimization of public
18 ~~safety services~~ regional government provided by State, regional, and local
19 agencies, including for public safety, emergency management, and public
20 health purposes;

1 (B) enhancement of regional collaboration and planning and
2 implementation;

3 (C) coordination, increased transparency, potential efficiencies, and
4 service improvements of nongovernmental agencies providing regional public
5 services, including but not limited to designated mental health agencies and
6 public transit providers;

7 (D) efficient, equitable, and transparent allocation of public
8 resources;

9 ~~(D)~~(E) promotion of effective regional public services for individuals
10 and municipalities;

11 ~~(E)~~(F) ~~clarification of review~~ the role and ~~oversight~~ authority of
12 elected county officials and their departments;

13 ~~(F)~~(G) reduction of duplicated or conflicting public services and
14 promotion of opportunities for intermunicipal collaboration;

15 ~~(G)~~(H) balance of availability and cost of services across
16 municipalities in each county;

17 ~~(H)~~(I) review of mechanisms of county and regional government
18 structures in other states; ~~and~~

19 ~~(I)~~(J) impact of climate change and resiliency on the maintenance of
20 public infrastructure, delivery of regional government services, and
21 coordination of regional emergency planning; and

(K) the role of Department of Public Safety and Vermont Emergency Management in responding to all hazards events.

* * *

(e) Report. On or before ~~November 1, 2025~~ December 15, 2026, the Committee shall report to the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs and the Senate Committee on Government Operations with its findings and any recommendations for legislative action.

(f) Meetings.

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(4) The Committee shall cease to exist on July 1, ~~2026~~ 2028.

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Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.

(Committee vote: _____)

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Representative _____

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FOR THE COMMITTEE