

Summary of H.944
As Introduced by House Transportation

Sec. 1. Transportation Program Adopted; Definitions

- Adopts the fiscal year 2027 Transportation Program.

Sec. 2. Rules Regarding Municipal Heavy Equipment Loan Fund; Repeal

- Repeals obsolete rules for the Municipal Heavy Equipment Loan Fund, which has been superseded by the statutes governing the Municipal Equipment and Vehicle Loan Fund.

Sec. 3. Amends 19 V.S.A. § 10c. Statement of Policy; Highways and Bridges

- Makes technical amendments to clarify provision relating to Vermont standards for roadway design and the application of certain federal signage requirements to roadways with lower design speeds.

Sec. 4. Amends 19 V.S.A. § 10. Duties

- Increases the contract amount below which the Secretary of Transportation may waive bonding requirements from \$100,000 to \$250,000.
- Permits Secretary of Transportation to waive bonding requirements for temporary stabilization work during an emergency.

Sec. 5. Adds 19 V.S.A. § 1514. Bridge Inspection; Posting; Closure

- Brings State into compliance with the National Bridge Inspection Standards regarding inspection, posting, and closure of bridges.
- Establishes a new penalty of up to \$1,000 for a person who violates the posting or closure of a bridge.

Sec. 6. Amends 23 V.S.A. § 2302. Traffic Violation Defined

- Makes technical amendments for consistency.
- Makes violation of a bridge posting or closure a traffic violation.

Sec. 7. Amends 24 V.S.A. § 5084. Public Transit Advisory Council

- Amends membership of Council to replace Community of Vermont Elders member with a member from AARP Vermont because COVE has dissolved.
- Combines representation of private bus operators into a single member.
- Eliminates taxi service member because position has not been filled in several years.

Sec. 8. Amends 24 App. V.S.A. ch. 801, § 7. Green Mountain Transit Authority Annual Budget and Assessments.

- Permits GMTA's annual budget to include voluntary member contributions, grants, donations, and other nonassessment revenue.
- Permits GMTA to seek voluntary member contributions, grants, donations, and other nonassessment revenue.
- Provides that voluntary member contributions will not impact member assessments.

Sec. 9. Amends Sunset of Agency of Transportation Public Private Partnership Authority

- Sunset is extended from 7/1/26 to 7/1/29.

Sec. 10. Amends 19 V.S.A. § 5. Transportation Board; Powers and Duties

- Limits review of an “1111 permit” decision to appeals by the applicant or permittee.

Sec. 11. Amends 19 V.S.A. § 38. Transportation Alternatives Grant Program

- Increases the maximum grant amount from \$300,000 to \$600,000.
- Eliminates the requirement that 50% of Grant Program funds be reserved for environmental mitigation projects and instead lets grants be issued for any eligible activity, including environmental mitigation and safe routes for nondrivers.

Sec. 12. Amends 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 62, Sec. 11. Transportation Alternatives Grant Program Awards in State Fiscal Years 2024-2027

- Increases the maximum grant amount for State fiscal year 2027 to \$1,200,000.

Sec. 13. Municipal Transportation Programs; Ongoing Evaluation; Identification of Improvements

- Directs Agency of Transportation to continue work, in consultation with Vt. League of Cities and Towns and Vt. Assoc. of Planning and Development Agencies, on studies from 2025 T-Bill related to cancellation of locally managed projects and identifying potential efficiencies related to town highway aid and municipal grant programs.
- Also directs the Agency, in consultation with Vt. League of Cities and Towns and Vt. Assoc. of Planning and Development Agencies, to examine laws related to setting speed limits and to identify opportunities to simplify and clarify those statutes to meet local needs related to safety and context sensitivity.
- Requires recommendations for legislative action to be submitted in January 2027.

Sec. 14. Amends 32 V.S.A. § 3709. PILOT Special Fund

- Provides that ½ of local option tax revenues in excess of the combined amount of annual PILOT payments + payments for correctional facilities + grand list stabilization payments + payments to Dept. of Taxes for expenses related to grand list and appraisal assistance shall be transferred to the T-Fund to support general aid for town highways.

Sec. 15. Amends 19 V.S.A. § 306. Appropriation; State Aid for Town Highways

- Provides that any amounts transferred from PILOT Fund for general State aid for town highways shall be added to the base appropriation for general State aid for town highways in the fiscal year that the transfer occurs.
- Does not impact the ongoing base appropriation for general State aid for town highways.

Sec. 16. Drive Electric Vermont; Appropriation

- Appropriates \$192,000 to continue the Agency’s partnership with Drive Electric Vermont.

Sec. 17. Amends 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 62, Sec. 8, Sale or Lease of Caledonia County State Airport

- Deletes requirement that Agency ensure that the Airport continue to be identified as a public use airport in National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems until 2050.

Sec. 18. Amends 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 62, Sec. 9. Repeal of Authority for Sale or Lease of Caledonia County State Airport

- Extends the sunset of authority to sell Airport from 5/1/2026 to 11/1/2027.

Sec. 19. Adds 23 V.S.A. chapter 43. Mileage-Based User Fee

- § 4301 sets forth the purpose of the Fee.
- § 4302 establishes definitions for the Fee.
- § 4303 establishes the process for assessing the Fee, which equals \$0.014 per mile traveled during the reporting period.
 - A reporting period is typically the twelve months between inspections, but can also end when an EV is sold, a lease ends, the EV is registered in another state, or the EV's registration is terminated for another reason.
 - U.S. government vehicles are exempt from the Fee.
 - Provides a process to dispute the amount of the Fee.
- § 4304 requires submission of mileage reports.
- § 4305 provides that unpaid amounts will accrue interest at an amount of 1.5% per month for up to a year and permits Commissioner to waive interest in certain circumstances.
- § 4306 establishes a penalty rate for the fee assessed for an EV for which mileage is not reported, which is equal to the fee for the 98th percentile of mileage traveled.
- § 4307 permits the Commissioner to suspend or refuse to renew the registration of an EV for which the fee has not been paid, a required report has not been filed, or a report included intentional misrepresentations.
- § 4308 sets out general powers of the Commissioner to implement the chapter.
- § 4309 permits an individual to appeal final decisions of the Commissioner to the Superior Court.

Sec. 20. Amends 23 V.S.A. § 361. Pleasure Cars

- Updates the name of the EV Infrastructure Fee to the Infrastructure Fee and redirects fee revenues to the Transportation Fund instead of the ACCD program to increase access to Level 1 and 2 chargers at multifamily residences and workplaces.

Sec. 21. Mileage-Based User Fee; Transition

- Provides that currently registered EVs will transition into the MBUF program beginning with their first annual inspection following 1/1/2027 and that \$89 from the EV infrastructure fee paid prior to 1/1/2027 shall be credited against the initial Fee due from the owner or lessee of the vehicle.

Sec. 22. Allocation of FY 2027 Mileage-Based User Fee Revenues

- Allocates revenues from MBUF in fiscal year 2027 to the general State aid for town highways in fiscal year 2028.

Sec. 23. Effective Dates

- MBUF sections take effect January 1, 2027.
- All other sections effective July 1, 2026.