

BILL OVERVIEW

“An act relating to the County and Regional Governance Study Committee”

As Amended by the Senate Committee on Government Operations, Draft 2.1

Introductory Notes: H.762 is session law that amend 2024, Act No. 118. Summaries of both Act 118 and H.762 are below. The County and Regional Governance Study Committee issued a [preliminary report](#) on November 5, 2024 recommending to extend the life of the Committee in order to complete its charge.

Summary of 2024, Act No. 118 (S.159), An act relating to the County and Regional Governance Study Committee: Act No. 118 tasked various entities with examining how to best strengthen county-level government in Vermont to enhance and optimize public safety, tax collection, and resource allocation.

- Sec. 1 created the legislator-composed County and Regional Governance Study Committee to address local government capacity challenges, enhance and optimize public safety, regional collaboration and planning, efficient, equitable, and transparent public resource allocation, and effective regional public services for individuals and municipalities.
- Sec. 2 created the non-legislator County and Regional Governance Technical Advisory Group to analyze the subject matter being considered by the County and Regional Governance Study Committee and advise, assist, and provide recommendations to the Study Committee, specifically on the structure and organization of county and regional government.
- Sec. 3 directed the Secretary of Administration to report to the County and Regional Governance Study Committee on federal funding opportunities resulting from the disaster declaration for the major flooding events of 2023 in the State and how Vermont’s lack of robust county or regional governance has impacted the State receipt of federal emergency funding.

Summary of H.762, As Amended by the Senate Committee on Government Operations, Draft 2.1:

Sec. 1 (Definitions) amend Sec. 1 of Act 118 in five ways:

- First, by adding a new subdivision (a)(1) stating the legislative intent of the County and regional Governance Study Committee Bill: “It is the intent of the General Assembly that existing direct coordination and communication between the State and Vermont municipalities should be retained or strengthened. County or regional governance should enhance the work of local and State governments and not become a procedural barrier between the State and municipalities.”
- Second, by amending subdivision (b) so that there will be only one committee chair, rather than two co-chairs as laid out in Act 118. The chair will now be selected from among the committee members, rather than being the ex-officio chairs of the Government Operations Committees.
- Third, by amending subdivision (c), to adjust the powers and duties of the Committee and emphasize “coordination, increased transparency, potential efficiencies, and service improvements of nongovernmental agencies providing regional public services” and to

analyze “the role of the Department of Public Safety and Vermont Emergency Management in responding to all hazards events.”

- Fourth, by amending subdivision (e) to extend the Committee’s report deadline from 11/1/2025 to 11/1/2027. (This subdivision (e), specifically, was amended by the Senate Committee on Government Operations.)
- And fifth, by amending subdivision (f) to extend the Committee’s sunset date from 7/1/2026 to 11/2/2027, as well as remove a reference to the co-chairs. (This subdivision (f), also, was amended by the Senate Committee on Government Operations.)

Sec. 2 (Effective Dates). This bill takes effect on passage.