



**March 27, 2020**

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**Vermont Chamber Successfully Advances COVID-19 Crisis Priorities**

The Vermont Chamber continues to dedicate 100% of our staff and resources to assist businesses during this COVID-19 crisis. Our efforts on behalf of businesses to date have resulted in relief from Meals and Rooms Tax filing and penalty deadlines for March and April payments, a 90-day extension on the income tax filing deadline, and the advancement of legislation that protects employers forced to layoff workers due to COVID-19 from having their unemployment insurance experience ratings negatively impacted.

**"Phase III" Federal Relief Package Advances**

Congress passed the CARES Act designed to provide immediate economic relief and support to business and workers. The bill includes funding to bolster domestic supply chains, provide child care assistance to essential workers, mitigate the local economic crisis, rebuild impacted industries, such as tourism or manufacturing supply chains, and give small businesses loans and other support. The bill also bolsters and expands unemployment insurance benefits, including opening access to unemployment benefits for part-time, self-employed, and gig economy. Most U.S. residents will also receive a direct deposit "rebate" payment.

**Meals and Rooms Meals Tax Filing Deadline Extended**

After a coordinated push by the Vermont Chamber and our industry partners, the Scott Administration is providing relief to Vermont businesses that

owe Meals and Rooms Tax or Sales and Use Tax. As a result of COVID-19 related closures and associated economic downturn, many local businesses are unable to meet the March 25 and April 25 filing deadlines. The Administration's actions mean that business owners unable to meet the original deadlines will not be charged any penalty or interest on these taxes for late submissions.

### **Essential Business Determination Guidance Issued**

Governor Scott recently issued an Addendum to his Executive Order which requires non-essential businesses to cease in-person operations. The Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) is encouraging businesses with questions or requests regarding the acceptable continuation of business operations to complete an online form. ACCD has also issued sector specific guidance to help business owners determine how their business is impacted.

### **Unemployment Insurance Changes Advance**

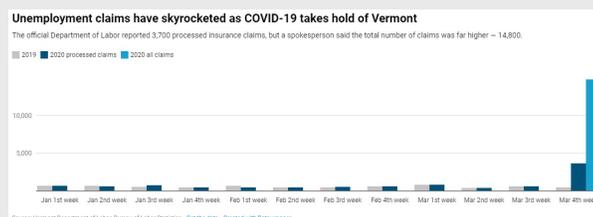
The Vermont House and Senate met this week to vote on rule changes that establish the framework necessary to allow remote voting and to pass legislation that provides additional resources for the COVID-19 response. H.742 would temporarily expand unemployment insurance (UI) eligibility benefits to those who leave work voluntarily for COVID-19 related issues. It also protects employers from UI rate increases as a result of laying off employees because of circumstances related to the crisis, a provision for which the Vermont Chamber advocated heavily.

### **Significant State Revenue Shortfalls Anticipated**

With thousands of Vermonters out of work and entire sectors of the economy shuttered, state leaders are bracing for tax revenue shortfalls. The State has taken a number of actions to provide immediate liquidity to businesses and individuals with some expectation of federal relief to sustain depleted state funds.

### **Vermont Jobless Claims Spike Due to COVID-19 Layoffs**

The Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) received 14,784 claims for unemployment last week, an all-time record which is three times the number of claims VDOL received during the Great Recession of 2008. The spike in unemployment claims in Vermont mirrors what is occurring nationally because of COVID-19 related layoffs.



## **In Case You Missed It**

[How Vermont Businesses Are Helping Our Communities](#)

[Senate Reconvenes to Pass Emergency COVID-19 Measures](#)

[Is Your Business Essential?](#)

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