



# State to Main

*The Voice of Vermont Business*



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## In This Issue:

- [Vermont Chamber Testifies in Senate on COVID-19 Business Impacts](#)
- [Vermont Chamber Asks Tax Committee to Act on Meals and Rooms Tax Abatement](#)
- [Vermont Chamber Pushes for Clarity on Unemployment Changes](#)
- [Vermont Chamber Testifies in House on COVID-19 Economic Impacts](#)
- [Vermont Chamber Hosts Remote Town Hall Event with Rep. Welch](#)
- [Lodging Industry Receives Additional Guidance on Bookings](#)
- [In Case You Missed It](#)

### **Vermont Chamber Testifies in Senate on COVID-19 Business Impacts**

Vermont Chamber President Betsy Bishop's testimony in the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing, and General Affairs outlined some of the immediate impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on businesses and reflected on the unprecedented difficulties facing every sector, including commercial property owners who have exhibited considerable flexibility in working with business tenants, while also balancing their own immediate financial obligations.

### **Vermont Chamber Asks Tax Committee to Act on Meals and Rooms Tax Abatement**

The Vermont Chamber submitted testimony to the House Committee on Ways and Means, advocating for abatement of February and March meals and rooms tax obligations. Because of efforts lead by the Vermont Chamber, the Scott Administration provided temporary relief from penalties for late filing and payment of the February and March meals and rooms tax. The Vermont Chamber continues to advocate for full abatement of these obligations through additional legislative action.

### **Vermont Chamber Pushes for Clarity on Unemployment Changes**

With expansion of Unemployment Insurance (UI) eligibility at the state level and new federal compensation that amounts to more than 100% wage replacement for claimants in some cases, Vermont businesses are concerned about a disincentive for employees to return to work. The problem is especially apparent in essential businesses that often struggle to maintain the workforce necessary to operate. The Vermont Chamber routinely converses with federal and state officials and the Congressional delegation to push for

clarity, especially around the circumstances with which workers can voluntarily separate from their employer and remain eligible for UI benefits.

### **Vermont Chamber Testifies in House on COVID-19 Economic Impacts**

The Vermont Chamber updated the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development on some of the COVID-19 related challenges facing businesses and advocated for February and March rooms and meals tax abatement. Additionally, the testimony highlighted some of the manufacturing sector's work in re-tooling plants or providing supplies to respond to shortages of critical products necessary for the COVID-19 response. The Vermont Chamber routinely communicates with members of the Vermont House to help ensure that the business community is fully represented during this crisis.

### **Vermont Chamber Hosts Remote Town Hall Event with Rep. Welch**

Congressman Peter Welch heard from over 150 tourism businesses during a remote Vermont Chamber Tourism Town Hall about how COVID-19 is affecting Vermont's hospitality and lodging industry. The Town Hall was an opportunity for tourism businesses to further Rep. Welch's understanding of COVID-19's impact, share ideas, and help shape what future assistance might look like. Congressman Welch articulated his commitment to fight for additional relief for businesses in the coming weeks. A full recording of the call is available on the Vermont Chamber COVID-19 landing page.

### **Lodging Industry Receives Additional Guidance on Bookings**

Governor Scott issued additional guidance on the acceptable continuation of lodging operations, which clarified that lodging may only be provided to individuals supporting the state's COVID-19 response, those maintaining critical infrastructure, vulnerable populations such as homeless individuals, and as quarantine facilities as arranged by the State. All online reservations have been ordered temporarily suspended. The Vermont Chamber communicates daily with the Administration to better determine when reservations for future dates can be safely permitted.

### **In Case You Missed It**

[Unemployment Claims 36 Times Higher Than Last Year](#)

[Paid More to Stay Home? Legislation Leads to Unintended Consequences](#)

[Vermont Manufacturers Switch Gears to Make Protective Medical Gear](#)

[Verizon and LISC Come Together to Support Small Businesses with COVID-19 Recovery Fund](#)

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In business since 1912, the Vermont Chamber of Commerce is a private, not-for-profit business organization with 1,500 members employing 45,000 people and representing all sectors of the state's economy. Our mission is to create an economic climate conducive to business growth and the preservation of the Vermont quality of life. Copyright ©2018 The Vermont Chamber of Commerce. All Rights Reserved.

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