



State to Main

The Voice of Vermont Business



May 8, 2020

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[Reopening Child Care Centers Paves Way for Return to Work](#)

Governor Scott announced today that child care centers can begin to reopen on June 1 and summer day camps will be able to operate this summer. As Gov. Scott noted, child care is a key component as the state reopens and Vermonters return to work. In mid-March, Vermont child care centers across the state were ordered to close for normal operations but were encouraged to continue providing services for essential workers. In mid-April, Gov. Scott outlined an approach for the phased restart of Vermont's economy. State and federal recommendations for businesses continue to evolve rapidly. The Vermont Chamber is tracking important updates related to Vermont's reopening plans and safety during the pandemic that impact businesses and employers.

[Tax Committee Proposes \\$50 Million In Increases](#)

The House Committee on Ways and Means discussed an anticipated Education Fund shortfall of \$167 million in fiscal year 2021. With uncertainty around whether CARES Act funds may be used to provide revenue replacement, the Committee reviewed potential tax increases at the state level that were identified as possible revenue sources. With entire economic sectors shuttered or limiting operations, businesses have little capacity to absorb the burden of significant tax increases. The Vermont Chamber will continue to oppose unsustainable tax increases that could exacerbate the present economic downturn.

[Senator Leahy Signs Letter to Treasury Calling for PPP Changes](#)

Senator Leahy was one of several members of the U.S. Senate who signed a letter calling on the Treasury to increase the percentage of Paycheck Protect Program (PPP) loans that can be used for non-payroll expenses. Currently, PPP loans will only be fully forgiven if borrowers spend at least 75% of proceeds on payroll expenses, leaving only 25% for non-payroll costs. The U.S. Senate letter specifically asks the Treasury and Small Business Administration to permit up to 50% of the PPP loans to be authorized for expenses other than payroll costs. These costs could include rent, utility payments, and other obligations.

[House Committee Debates New Meals and Rooms Tax Mandates](#)

Following a push in March by the Vermont Chamber and partners, Vermont's Tax Commissioner temporarily lifted penalties for late payment of February and March meals and rooms taxes to provide the restaurant and lodging industry with some relief. Several members of the House Committee on Ways and Means have expressed dismay over the Tax Commissioner's waiving of these fees. On Wednesday, members of the Committee discussed potentially stripping the Commissioner of this authority in the future. The Committee also discussed mandating that restaurants and lodges hold all meals and rooms tax collections in a separate bank account and provide payments to the state more frequently. The Vermont Chamber strongly opposes these changes. We are working to ensure Vermont's restaurants and lodges are not burdened with additional mandates in a time when many businesses are struggling to survive.

[Governor Scott Lifts Certain Outdoor Recreation Business Restrictions](#)

In Addendum 13 to Executive Order 01-20, Governor Scott lifted certain restrictions related to outdoor recreation. The Addendum permits all businesses, nonprofit organizations, and government entities that support or offer outdoor recreation or fitness, and require low or no direct physical contact, to resume operations. These businesses are required to comply with the health and safety guidelines outlined in Addendum 13. Impacted entities include, but are not limited to, state and municipal parks, recreation associations, trail networks, golf courses, big game check stations, and guided expeditions.

[Broadband Conversation Continues](#)

In April, Vermont Chamber President Betsy Bishop published an op-ed that called for reimagining Vermont as a work-from-home capital. One of the barriers to achieving this goal, also identified in the op-ed, is the lack of broadband connectivity in many rural Vermont communities. The Vermont Chamber is excited about the prospect of bringing broadband connectivity to Vermont's underserved communities, and we fully support the Department of Public Service's Broadband Development Plan. We continue to hear from businesses across the state expressing support for investment in broadband infrastructure. If you have comments about how broadband access would impact your business, please contact Vermont Chamber Government Affairs Director [Charles Martin](#).

[Vermont's Businesses Will Require Ongoing Relief](#)

While many businesses are benefiting from federal and state relief already provided, the hardship facing Vermont's small businesses is anticipated to continue for some time. Governor Scott recently indicated that due to ongoing safety concerns, the state is not yet ready to wholeheartedly welcome out-of-state visitors. With out-of-state tourism spending representing a significant portion of the business community's revenue, businesses will require additional and sizable relief to weather the economic downturn brought on by COVID-19. Keeping in mind this immense and ongoing need, the Vermont Chamber is working with state officials to develop an equitable relief package that properly accounts for the needs of the state's diverse business community.

[Resource Roundup](#)

The Vermont Chamber staff has spent hundreds of hours on COVID-19 Zoom calls, conference calls, and webinars learning so that we can answer your questions in this ever-changing time. Collectively, we have had thousands of individual communications with members and non-members during the crisis. It is likely we can help you, too. [Contact us](#) with questions and we will get you answers. We have also seen excellent content from our members and Vermont agencies, which we are compiling weekly in our *Resource Roundup*. If you have content to include, send links to news@vtchamber.com. Thank you for your continued support. We are in this together.

[In Case You Missed It](#)

[Summer Tourism Looks Bleak; Scott Tells Visitors to Stay Away, for Now](#)

[Weekly Unemployment Claims Fall by Over 1,000 but Still Historically High](#)

[Scott Administration Proposes Plan to Fill \\$200 Million Budget Gap](#)

[Many Vermonters Interested in Telecommuting After COVID-19 Crisis, Survey Finds](#)

[Final Reading: Statehouse Leaders on Board With Scott's Budget Plan](#)

[Congressional Delegation Sets Priorities for Second COVID-19 Stimulus Bill](#)

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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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