



State to Main

The Voice of Vermont Business



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[Bad Week for Businesses in Legislature](#)

Despite unprecedented economic downturn, the Legislature advanced several proposals over the last week that are harmful to businesses. Recent legislative action included:

- House leadership called for slashing the Administration's economic relief package by \$200 million
- The Senate Committee on Finance advanced a bill that would prohibit lodging operators from providing guests with single-use personal care products
- The House voted to increase business property tax rates from \$1.59 per \$100 in 2020 to \$1.628 per \$100 in 2021
- The Senate Committee on Finance leadership expressed opposition to providing funds to build out broadband in unserved communities struggling with work-from-home, learn-from-home, and telehealth shortfalls

The Vermont Chamber encourages the business community to [reach out](#) to their legislators with questions or concerns about these recent actions.

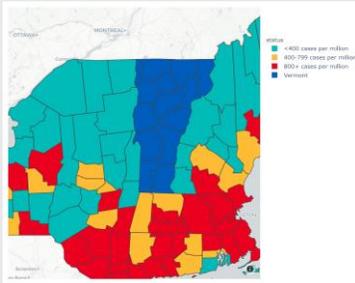
[Vermont Chamber Calls for Changes to Economic Relief Package](#)

Vermont Chamber President Betsy Bishop testified in the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development this week on the economic recovery and relief package proposed by the Scott Administration. Vermont Chamber member Lynn Green of the Four Chimney's Inn in Bennington also testified, largely echoing Betsy's input, while also providing a detailed analysis of the relief package.



The Vermont Chamber's testimony called for several changes, and the Chamber is also pushing for maintaining the original topline funding amounts and the proposed investment in marketing. Immediate relief in the form of grants is essential to mitigating the economic downturn currently impacting almost every sector, and the Vermont Chamber will continue to work with legislative leaders to advance relief funds with necessary changes.

[Lodging and Restaurants Restrictions Updated](#)



Governor Scott announced new guidance for indoor dining and outlined a plan to welcome out-of-state tourists. Indoor dining will be allowed at 25 percent capacity or 10 total customers and staff combined, whichever is greater, as of June 8. All current social distancing standards, as well as state and CDC guidelines that are in place now for dining facilities, will remain. Also announced were changes to lodging and campgrounds guidelines. Effective June 8, lodging

properties and campgrounds may book 50 percent of rooms for non-residential lodging or have a total of 25 guests and staff on the property – whichever is greater. Important updates to quarantine restrictions were also highlighted. Please contact [Amy Spear](#) with any questions.

[Vermont Chamber Joins States in Calling for Childcare Relief](#)

The Vermont Chamber joined State Chambers around the nation in signing onto a letter calling on Congress to provide temporary emergency assistance targeted to licensed childcare providers to help cover increased expenses and forgone revenue directly tied to maintaining public health. Bolstering the state's childcare resources is a vital component of restarting the economy and is essential to the economic future of Vermont. The Vermont Chamber continues to support improving childcare resources in the state. Doing so is essential to maximizing Vermont's workforce potential and will also help to attract new families to live and work in Vermont.

[Paycheck Protection Program Changes Coming](#)

Following passage in the U.S. House last week, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed changes to the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) on Wednesday. The Paycheck

Protection Program Flexibility Act (PPPFA) now heads to the President's desk where it is expected to be signed into law. PPPFA makes several changes to the existing program, including extending the covered period from eight weeks to 24 weeks, extending the date to restore your fulltime employees from June 30 to December 31, and increasing the term of a loan to a minimum of five years, from two years. The Vermont Chamber has pushed for the changes included in the PPPFA in our advocacy with the congressional delegation.

[Senate Committee Advances Concerning New Lodging Regulations](#)

The Senate Committee on Finance advanced S.227, a bill that would prohibit lodging establishments from providing personal use products in single-use bottles. With many establishments closed or operating in a limited manner, the possibility of being forced to invest additional funds in retrofitting rooms with multiple-use dispensers is a daunting prospect for lodging operators. As a result of COVID-19, there also currently exists considerable safety concerns related to the use of community-use appliances. The Vermont Chamber will continue to convey to legislators the reality that businesses require immediate action to advance relief funds and at this time lodging establishments in particular have little or no capacity to absorb additional administrative mandates, added costs, or safety risks.

[Senate Committee Reluctant to Provide Emergency Broadband Access](#)

On Thursday, the Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on Finance suggested he was not inclined to support plans to provide emergency broadband access to Vermonters currently impacted by a lack of access to work-from-home, learn-from-home, and telehealth capabilities. The Vice-Chair specifically expressed reluctance to support the provision of emergency broadband funds to build out broadband at federally defined broadband levels, saying instead he may prefer to withhold funds until a hypothetical plan to provide higher speeds comes to volition at an unspecified date in the future. The Vermont Chamber will continue to encourage the Legislature to quickly act to provide broadband access to unserved communities.

[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](#)

[House Lawmakers Move to Reverse Scott Budget Cuts](#)

[Jay Canning: Let Vermont Hospitality Revive](#)

[John Killacky: The Arts Are Essential Businesses](#)

[Weekly Unemployment Claims Keep Falling, but Slower](#)



The Voice of Vermont Business

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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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