



State to Main

The Voice of Vermont Business



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[Vermont Chamber Testifies on Impacted Tourism Industry](#)

Amy Spear, Vermont Chamber Vice President of Tourism, testified this week in the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development on the ongoing impact of pandemic related restrictions and the economic downturn. Amy briefed the Committee on many of the specific challenges facing tourism industry businesses, with a focus on lodging properties and restaurants, and advocated in support of the lodging and restaurant rescue package recently proposed by the Scott Administration. As written, the Administration's proposal would provide \$133 million in relief funds, including \$23 million for businesses left out of relief programs created in June and \$50 million for the hospitality industry. The Committee spent much of the week reviewing a draft bill that, if passed into law, would authorize the additional funds.

[Latest Business Relief Proposal Includes Vermont Chamber Priorities](#)

Officials from the Agency of Commerce and Community Development testified in the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development on the status of existing relief programs and on Governor Scott's most recent economic relief proposal. Deputy Secretary Ted Brady explained that if the latest relief proposal were advanced by the Legislature, the \$133 million proposal would be divided into four categories, including a \$50 million Targeted Hospitality and Tourism Grant Program that would specifically serve industries most impacted by the pandemic. The Vermont Chamber has advocated for the advancement of additional funds for existing relief programs and for a set-aside program that would serve industries most impacted. As the August and September legislative session unfolds, the Vermont Chamber will continue pushing for additional, meaningful relief to address the unprecedented hardship facing Vermont's business community.

[Local Chambers Call for Relief](#)

Carol Lighthall, Okemo Valley Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, and Eric Friedman, Executive Director of the Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce, testified in the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development in support of a proposal to provide \$1 million in relief to local chambers of commerce, many of which have seen decreases in revenue as a result of the economic crisis impacting their member-businesses around the state. The two chamber executives briefed the Committee on the services local chambers continue to offer small businesses, explaining that in many cases chambers are waiving membership fees and offering technical support and advocacy resources to struggling businesses for free. Over the last several months, chambers of commerce have worked to ensure the Vermont business community is well represented and able to navigate the federal and state programs providing resources to COVID-19 impacted businesses.

[VDTM Highlights \\$10 Million Marketing Proposal](#)

The Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing (VDTM) briefed members of the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development on a \$10 million proposal intended to amplify marketing to promote tourism and encourage safe travel to Vermont. VDTM Commissioner Heather Pelham explained to the Committee the funds would be used to support the long-term promotion of Vermont's brand and to attract visitors from regions the Vermont Department of Health has deemed safe. Over the 2020 Legislative Session, the Vermont Chamber led advocacy efforts for additional State marketing dollars, pointing out that Vermont falls far behind other states in New England in our investment in tourism marketing. In June, the Legislature provided additional funds to the VDTM for related purposes, and the Administration's latest proposal would build upon the earlier investment to aid Vermont's economy and strengthen our tourism industry in the future.

[Act 250 Reform Remains in Limbo](#)

The Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy continued discussions related to their latest Act 250 proposal. The current proposal includes encouraging provisions that would largely remove municipal areas of enhanced designation from Act 250 jurisdiction. If implemented, these changes would encourage sustainable economic development and aid in economic recovery from COVID-19 impacts. The current proposal also includes several concerning provisions that could significantly increase the scope of Act 250 jurisdiction, including sections related to forest fragmentation and rules that would bring newly constructed roads and driveways totaling more than 2,000 feet into Act 250 jurisdiction. The Vermont Chamber will work to ensure communities, both urban and rural, do not suffer negative economic impacts because of final changes to Act 250.

[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. 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, please send information to news@vtchamber.com. Thank you for your support.

[In Case You Missed It](#)

[Vt. Chamber Government Affairs Director Testifies on Governor's Budget Proposal](#)

[Vt. Futures: Now Is the Time to Rethink Taxes](#)

[#BuyLocalVermont Program Created by State of Vermont](#)

[Lawmakers Promise to Push for State College 'Bridge Funding' in State Budget](#)

[Durkee: Extended Road to Recovery for Commercial Real Estate](#)



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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