



State to Main

The Voice of Vermont Business



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Coronavirus Prompts State House Closure

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, legislative leadership announced today that the General Assembly will recess for at least one week. As of now, the planned return date is set for Tuesday, March 24. We will keep you informed as the situation develops.

Economic Development Initiatives Advance

The Senate Economic Development Committee voted unanimously to advance S.256, a bill that expands economic development initiatives. It would create an incentive program for workers who relocate to Vermont by providing qualified new employees up to \$7,500 for relocation expenses, would enable project-based Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for smaller construction projects, and provide additional funding to the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing and enable a Capital Investment Convertible Loan Program. The Vermont Chamber supports programs that encourage economic growth, particularly in our rural communities.

Senate Committee Approves Tax Bills

The Senate Committee on Finance advanced several bills this week, including S.190, which tightens criteria for the Standard Offer Program; S. 337, a bill that makes change to energy-efficiency entities to reduce greenhouse gases in the

thermal energy and transportation sectors; and S. 191, an act relating to tax increment financing districts. The Vermont Chamber is supportive of programs that optimize state investments to recruit additional workforce and build or renovate housing and commercial/retail space, all of which is vital to sustaining economic growth.

Bill Would Limit Ability to Prevent Storefront Solicitation

The Vermont Chamber testified on H.492, a bill that would erode the ability of business owners to prevent loitering and solicitation at storefronts. Recent changes made in Draft 3.0 of H.492 struck particularly worrisome content that added shopping mall interiors to the list of spaces forced to allow solicitation. The Vermont Chamber supports the general intent of H.492. However, we have serious concerns about limiting the ability of business owners to facilitate safe and successful business operations.

Corporate Income Tax Debate Develops

The House Ways and Means Committee continued its review of the Governor's proposed corporate tax bill. The Vermont Chamber believes in a consistent and predictable fiscal policy that does not increase the tax burden on businesses or their customers. Given that Vermont has one of the most progressive tax systems in the country, we continue our work to ensure that annual budget decisions are made consistent with available revenue.

Vermont Chamber Testifies on Workforce Development Initiative

The Vermont Chamber testified in the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development in support of removing Vermont's tax on military retirement incomes. The Committee supports adding military pension tax relief as one of the economic priorities included in their economic development bill. The change will likely require approval from the House Committee on Ways and Means prior to a vote on the House floor.

Bill that Puts Manufacturers at Risk for Higher Electric Rates Advances

The Senate Finance Committee continued its review of S.267, a bill that would increase the cost of electricity and negatively impact large energy users like manufacturers and ski areas. The Vermont Chamber supports the recommendation by the Department of Public Service to conduct a study as the first step to fully understand the costs and benefits before implementing a mandate in statute. S.267 then moved to the Senate Committee on Natural

Resources and Energy where utilities again weighed in again with concerns. The Committee is now drafting a new version with an amendment to include a planning analysis of the amendment to increase the distributed renewable generation portfolio from 10% to 20%.

In Case You Missed It

[State of Vermont Coronavirus Guidelines](#)

[Vermont Companies React to COVID-19](#)

[Legislature Grapples with Coronavirus Response](#)

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