



VAST's PRIORITIES FOR VERMONT LEGISLATORS 2027

Cindy Locke, VAST Executive Director, September 17, 2027 Edition

VAST continues to advocate for our members, landowners, and volunteers. We feel strongly that these issues need to become a priority in the Vermont State House this coming session.

Vermont needs legislators who will focus on affordability, accountability, economic opportunity, property rights, and public safety—not more government mandates, spending, and bureaucracy.

Our priorities are straightforward:

Stop Burdensome New Regulations

Stop imposing new regulatory mandates and unnecessary burdens that make it harder for landowners, farmers, businesses, and families to afford and use their property and operate successfully.

Repeal ACT 181

Repeal ACT 181 in its entirety. Vermont's land-use and conservation policies must respect private property rights and allow Vermonters to responsibly use and improve their land.

Give Vermonters the Full Picture on Conserved Land

Vermont should provide a complete and transparent accounting of land that is permanently conserved as well as land enrolled in the Current Use Program. Use an accurate accounting of properties in Current Use and highlight the total amount that has been pulled out, while explaining what a landowner would have to do to remove their land from Current Use. This way, everyone will understand why most Vermont property in Current Use remains in the program indefinitely.

These categories are different, but Vermonters deserve to see the full amount of land already subject to conservation programs or restrictions. The goal is a clear, honest picture of how much of Vermont is already conserved or otherwise protected.

Lower Property Taxes

VAST 26 Vast Lane, Barre, VT 05641
802-229-0005
cindy@vtvast.org

Lower property taxes and control the spending that drives them higher. Vermont landowners, families, farmers, and businesses should not be forced to absorb ever-increasing property-tax bills.

Fully Fund Roads and Bridges

Make maintaining Vermont's roads and bridges a priority. Fix infrastructure before repairs become more expensive than usual upkeep. Safe, reliable roads and bridges are essential to Vermont.

Reduce State Spending and Balance the Budget

Vermont must live within its means.

Reduce unnecessary spending, eliminate waste and duplication, establish clear priorities, and balance state budgets without continually increasing the financial burden on taxpayers.

Increase Competition in Health Care

Open Vermont's health-insurance market to additional insurers where legally and practically feasible.

Greater competition and consumer choice can create pressure to improve affordability and coverage. Vermont should examine market data and pursue policies that give individuals and businesses more choices and help control the rising cost of health care.

Fix Education Funding and Control Costs

Vermont needs to take a hard look at its current education policies and funding system.

Funding should accurately reflect Vermont's student population and actual educational needs while controlling administrative and other costs. We should focus resources on students and classrooms and make the education system financially sustainable for taxpayers.

Grow Business Opportunities

Vermont needs more economic opportunity, not more barriers to doing business.

Legislators should pursue policies that make it easier for existing businesses to expand and for new businesses to start, invest, hire, and grow in Vermont.

Protect Farmers' and Landowners' Ability to Create Businesses

Farmers and landowners should have reasonable opportunities to create viable businesses on their property.

Vermont should review restrictions involving visitor limits, operating hours, neighboring property boundaries, and ACT 250 jurisdiction that can prevent otherwise viable farm and land-based businesses from succeeding.

Reduce Government Bureaucracy

Vermont should reduce the number of unnecessary paid regulatory commissions, boards, and councils overseeing state and municipal programs.

Every government body should have a clear purpose, measurable value, and accountability for the money it spends. Where responsibilities overlap, or an entity no longer serves a necessary purpose, it should be consolidated or eliminated.

Make Our Communities Safer

Public safety must be a priority.

Vermont needs policies that support law enforcement, hold offenders accountable, strengthen the criminal-justice system, and address the conditions that contribute to crime. Vermonters deserve to feel safe in their homes, businesses, neighborhoods, and communities.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Vermont does not need more government for the sake of government.

We need responsible spending, lower taxes, fewer unnecessary regulations, respect for private property, stronger infrastructure, affordable health care, sustainable education funding, economic growth, and safer communities.

Our legislators should be held accountable for making government smarter, smaller, more transparent, and more focused on the people who pay for it.

Vermont can protect its land, support its communities, and preserve its character without making it harder for Vermonters to live, work, recreate, farm, build, and do business here.