

Shaping Vermont's Response to Climate Change

Community Energy and Climate Action Conference Saturday, December 6, 2014 | Lake Morey Inn, Fairlee

The Future Transportation System, Putting Policy into Action

Representative Diane Lanpher, Vergennes, VT



Tips for Successful Legislative Strategy

- The most fundamental and effective way to influence the legislative process is by voicing your opinion and concerns to elected officials.
- Vermont Legislators speak directly with citizens, instead of getting turned away by secretaries or other staff members.
- Nothing impresses Legislators as much as citizens willing to discuss local issues or state topics.
- Individuals or groups who make the effort to speak their mind are worth an Army of lobbyists in Montpelier.



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Getting Started

Who is my Representative?

Who is my Senator?

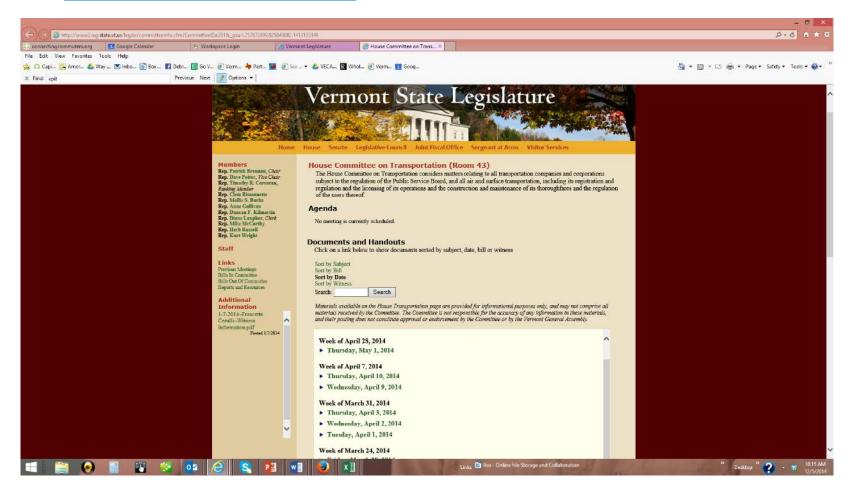
How A bill becomes a law?

Frequently asked questions?

NOTE: Each Committee has it's own "Standing Committee Page"

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Vermont State Legislature

Once a bill is introduced contact your elected officials and express your support or opposition to it.

Here are a few tips to help you along the way:*

Identify the Bill or Issue – Over 1,000 bills are introduced to the VT State Legislature each year. If you write about a particular piece of legislation, be specific, and reference the bill number.

Timely – Inform your elected officials while there is still time to take action.

Focus on Your Own Delegation – As a constituent, your views are most valued by the Members who depend on you for re-election. Focus your energy on them.

^{*(}Source: selected Vermont Lobbying firms)



Tips continued:

Be Reasonably Brief - Keep your letter concise and to the point.

Ask for a Response – If your elected official is vague in his or her response, write again and request clarification. Don't hesitate to ask questions. Your elected official works for you. Don't sound demanding or threatening, however.

Give your Reasons for Taking a Stand – Your representative may not know all the effects of the bill and what it may mean to an important segment of his or her constituency.

Be Constructive – If a bill deals with a problem you admit exists, but you believe it takes the wrong approach, offer your elected official an alternative.

Vermont State Legislature

Tips continued:

Ask for Specific Action – If your questions or concerns are general (i.e., "I hope you are for renewable energy") you will most likely receive a form letter. Ask for specific action, such as co-sponsoring a bill or supporting an amendment.

Share Expert Knowledge With your Representative – No one can possibly be an expert in all fields; many constituents are experts in some of them. Legislators welcome expert advice and counsel.

Say "Well Done" When it is Deserved – Members of Congress are human too, and they appreciate an occasional "well done" from people who believe they have done the right thing. But even if you think your representative went wrong on an issue, a non-threatening letter stating your disagreement would be welcome; it may help on another issue later.