

ACEC/VT Legislative & Government Affairs Committee

Legislative Update

1/11/2023



The 2023 legislative session began on January 4th and is set to be a very exciting one. Vermont just had a historic election season with unprecedented number of new faces due to record retirements and members seeking higher office last session. The first week of a new biennium was chalk full of ceremony, organization and member training.

The Speaker of the House and Representative, Jill Krowinski from Burlington, was elected for her second term in the position. During the first week, there were a few changes to house committee structure, most notably the House Natural Resources and Wildlife Committee and the House Energy Committee were combined to form the Committee on Natural Resources and Energy. The General & Housing Committee was relinquished of their military oversight which was assigned to Gov Ops. Committee. Former Transportation Chair Diane Lanpher is now the chair of the Appropriations committee and was replaced by Representative Sara Coffey.

The New Senate President Pro Tempore, Phil Baruth of Chittenden County, Lieutenant Governor Zuckerman and Senator Dick Mazza assembled as the Committee on Committees to make the assignments. The Transportation committee stayed the same as in the past biennium with Senator Mazza at the helm. Senator Keshia Ram Hinsdale took over as chair of the Senate Economic Development committee, Senator Russ Ingalls as chair of Institutions and Senator Ruth Hardy as chair of Gov Ops.

On January 5, 2023, Deputy Secretary of State, Chris Winters announced the first run of statewide offices including the new Attorney General Charity Clark, Treasurer Mike Pieciak, and incoming Secretary of State Sara Copeland Hanzas. The Senate officially appointed David Zuckerman as Lieutenant Governor then Lt Gov Zuckerman installed reelected Governor Phil Scott in a joint session of the house and senate.

Currently there have been 52 house bills introduced in the House and 16 senate bills in the Senate. ACEC/VT Legislative & Government Affairs Committee is currently tracking 15 house bills and 3 senate bills that have an impact on engineering and design services in the State of Vermont. Some examples of these bills include H.6; An act relating to development and subdivisions above 1,500 feet, H.30; An act relating to the regulation of wetlands, and S.9; An act relating to the authority of the State Auditor to examine the books and records of State contractors. All tracked bills can be found here: <https://www.acec.org/vermont/acecvt-member-news/>

By the end of January, the House will release close to 600 bills and the Senate is expected to release 300. The majority party has prioritized housing, child care, climate and consumer protection. Advocates are expecting to see the Clean Energy Standard which was successfully vetoed in the prior biennium reintroduced under a new name with a few changes. Legislators will be hearing from agencies and advocate on studies and policy reports as well as budgetary issues which will then lead them to a hustle to get bills out by the March crossover deadline.

If you would like to participate in the Legislative & Government Affairs Committee, contact skelley@sanbornhead.com.

VERMONT GOVERNANCE – VERMONT GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

The Vermont Legislature is made up of 150 House Representatives and 30 State Senators. Both the House and the Senate have a democratic major with 99 Democrats (vs. 37 Republicans) in the House and 19 Democrats (vs. 7 Republicans) in the Senate. Both the House and Senate have some Progressives and the House has a few Independents. Here is where you can find your House Representative: [All Representatives \(vermont.gov\)](#) and here is where you can find your Senator [All Senators \(vermont.gov\)](#).