

When you call the Sergeant-at-Arms: Please leave your name & phone number

Say, "I'd like to leave a message for __," Leave a clear message, such as:

"I do **not** support..." **OR** I am asking for your vote on __"

Please refer to a bill number or name whenever possible.



THIS IS FOR THE USE OF FARM BUREAU MEMBERS ONLY!!

FOR THE WEEK ENDING MAY 13, 2022

In this edition:

THE GAVEL FELL TO CLOSE THE SESSION!

Thursday night signaled the end of the "COVID Biennium" for the Vermont legislature! After two years of zooming, masking, debating and voting, the 2021-2022 session has finally come to an end. Over those months of activity, the House introduced 746 bills and the Senate introduced 287. Only a handful of those actually became law.

In the next couple of UTGD reports, your team will break down what happened to the bills we were following on your behalf. These reports will become "white papers" with suggestions for questions as you interact with candidates for all open seats this summer!

And given the enormous turnover anticipated in both the Senate and the House, it's incredibly important that your voice becomes part of the landscape – relationships are the lifeblood of advocacy – and you can see in the next portion of this report – we are losing some really strategic folks!

SENATORS LEAVING AND THE COMMITTEES THEY REPRESENT

Out of 30 senators, 9 have confirmed they are not running for their present seats. Becca Balint (pro tem), Joe Benning (chair of Institutions), and Kesha Ram-Hinsdale are all running for other positions. Cheryl Hooker and Josh Terenzini (both of Rutland) have bowed out, as well as Anthony Pollina (Washington), Jeannette White (Windham, chair of Gov't Ops), Chris Pearson (Chittenden) and Alice Nitka (Windsor).

We are anticipating at least two more senators to announce they will not run.

Of those folks, Senate Ag will lose 2 (Pollina and Pearson), Govt Ops will lose 2 (White and Pollina who are chair and vice chair respectively), and Judiciary will lose 2 (Nitka and Benning). Senator Benning is also chair of Institutions and regularly supports the fairs' request for capital funding.

The loss of 2 senators from the Agriculture Committee is hard; Senator Pearson was often a swing vote on some of our issues and worked very hard in the last weeks on the water withdrawal and pollinator protection bills to our benefit.

Currently, all senators on the Natural Resources Committee are running for re-election as far as we know.

ON THE HOUSE SIDE – EVEN MORE CHANGES!

The representatives we understand are NOT seeking re-election this year include the following:

Paul Lefebvre, Janet Ancel (chair of Ways and Means), Tom Bock, Sara Copeland Hanzas (chair of Gov Ops), Charles Kimbell, Marcia Martel, Leland Morgan, Terry Norris, Carolyn Partridge (chair of House Ag), Heidi Scheuermann, Tanya Vyhovsky, Tommy Walz, Kate Webb (chair of House Ed), Linda Joy Sullivan, Hal Colston, Jessica Brumsted, Larry Cupoli, Peter Fagan, Bob Helm, John Killacky, Warren Kitzmiller, Barbara Murphy, John Palasik, Vicki Strong, Bill Lippert (chair of House Health), George Till, Dave Yacovone, Mary Hooper (chair of House Approps), Maida Townsend, Wayne LaRoche, Ann Pugh (chair of House Human Services) and Mary Feltus. That's over 1/5 of the total representatives, and not all have announced yet.

We now have a serious challenge in House Agriculture and Forestry, as out of 8 on the committee, Reps. Partridge, Bock, Norris and Strong will be gone. (In case you are wondering, that leaves Graham, Pearl, Surprenant and O'Brien).

House Appropriations will be losing 6 of their 11, including their chair and vice-chair.

House Natural Resources will be losing two (Morgan and Lefebvre).

MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER FOR COUNTIES TO STEP UP THIS SUMMER!

As you can see, we need all counties to provide "stump time" for candidates this summer! With 10 out of 30 senators and 32 out of 150 representatives purportedly not seeking re-election (to date), Vermont Farm Bureau needs to promote AGVOCACY and get our issues ready for next year with anyone running for office.

The last day for getting signed petitions into the Secretary of State's office to qualify for the August 9 primary is May 26 for major party candidates; minor party candidates and independents have until August 4 to declare. Names and contact information for major party candidates will be available online at the end of May, and we will be able to send that information out to any county after that.

Your VTFB advocacy team is also working on a template of how to host a candidate event, including information about who to invite, insurance, questions, etc., that will be available by the end of June.

Please consider hosting a meet and greet or Q&A session with your county candidates – and don't forget there is a pretty full slate of statewide candidates (Lt. Governor, Treasurer, Attorney General and Secretary of State) that may be available, too!

BILLS OF INTEREST WE WILL BE REPORTING ON

There are about 2 dozen bills that we will do a comprehensive wrap-up on over the next couple of weeks, including gubernatorial vetoes that were sustained or overturned during the session. These include Act 250, water withdrawal, right to farm, pollinator protection, plastics in compost, broadband, universal meals, cannabis, conservation, agritourism, forestry and current use changes. If there is something specific we don't cover, please let us know and we'll be glad to find the outcome for you!

We may also go back and revisit some of the bills that never made it out of committee and why – all with an eye towards developing policy throughout the summer and updating our policy book in November.

Many thanks to our partners at Morris Government Affairs, LLC – Bridget, Jill and Michael – for all their help in committees this year!

If you are interested in being the legislative advocate for Vermont Farm Bureau in 2023 and beyond, please let President Joe Tisbert (josephvtfb@gmavt.net) or 1st Vice President Mary White (fortwaitefarm@gmail.com) know as soon as you can. We have 3 new field staff working for VTFB and would love to have the new “team” assembled and trained before the next Legislative session begins!

Thanks for supporting Vermont Farm Bureau!

From the team – Jackie, Joe, Jill, Michael and Bridget

