



## VLCV Overview of the 2009 Legislative Session

In January of 2009, VLCV held their annual legislative breakfast in the Vermont State House. During the event, VLCV released its Conservation and Environmental Legislative Platform. The Platform is a reflection of our highest priorities for the legislative session. Below is a brief synopsis of the outcome for each Platform issue.

### **Vermont's Clean Energy Future**

**Help Vermonters Invest in Home Based Renewable Energy and Efficiency/Support Larger Renewable Energy Projects:** The Legislature passed and the governor allowed to become law without his signature, H.446, *Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency*. H.446 accomplishes the following:

- First and foremost, it puts Vermont back on the map as a national leader by establishing the first statewide standard offer program in the country which allows Vermonters to more easily install renewable energy resources by providing financial certainty to those developing wind, solar, small hydro and farm methane projects
- Enables towns to create clean energy assessment districts to help property owners finance energy efficiency and renewable energy projects
- Strengthens Vermont's building efficiency standards, encourages the Agency of Natural Resources to re-examine their ban on wind power development on state lands, and directs \$30 million of federal economic recovery money to the Vermont Clean Energy Development Fund

**Close Vermont Yankee in 2012:** No action was taken on the relicensing of Vermont Yankee. This issue will be dealt with during the 2010 legislative session and will remain a high priority for VLCV.

### **Vermont's Working Landscapes and Smart Growth Values**

**Adequately Fund the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board:** Lawmakers were able to secure \$6 million in funding from the property transfer tax for this critical program. The legislature also provided additional funding through federal recovery money (ARRA) and other federal funds. This is a huge victory for conservation, given the Douglas administration proposed cutting the program altogether.

**Protect Vermont's Working Landscapes:** Unfortunately, a bill (S.99) designed to curb strip development outside Vermont's settled areas and encourage clustering of new development stalled in the Senate. The bill would have updated Act 250 language to better protect our working farms and forestland from inefficient development.

### **Transportation in the 21st Century**

**Clean, Effective, and Modern Transportation Solutions:** The Ethan Allen Express - rail service from Rutland to New York - was maintained which goes a long way towards preserving mass transit in Vermont.

**Fix it First - Keep Vermont Safe:** The legislature made certain that ARRA funding will be dedicated towards "fix-it-first" projects. This ensures that Vermont's crumbling infrastructure is improved before building any new roads.

### **Waste Management**

**Support Programs to Increase Recycling and Composting:** In May 2008, a Study Committee was established and many of the recommendations that came from that process were discussed during the 2009 legislative session. VLCV will be back in 2009 working to make these recommendations law.

- Statewide Pay-As-You-Throw - Ensures residents are charged for the amount they throw away.
- Infrastructure Development - Improving handling and hauling of a variety of waste products.
- Parallel Collection of Trash and Recyclables - Ensures trash haulers also provide collection of recyclables.