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To help you effectively advocate for your municipality during the 2018 legislative session, we offer these

few suggestions:

• Legislative Tracking. Visit the Vermont State Legislature website, <http://legislature.vermont.gov/>, and follow daily legislative activity. You can read House and Senate Calendars and Journals, track current bills and new drafts, and committee activity, read testimony, and find contact information on each of your senators and representatives.

• Communicate with your legislators. You are a constituent with a message, so speak up! Once you find you legislators’ contact information – email addresses and phone numbers –communicate with them on issues important to you. Be specific in your requests, make your points succinctly, and be sure to give the local angle in telling your story. Be honest, accurate, and credible, because it is your insight, expertise, and credibility that earn you a seat at the table. And don’t forget to say “thank you.”

• Timing is Everything. Every bill goes through a committee process and, along the legislative way, contacting the right person at the right time is crucial. Read VLCT’s Weekly Legislative Report and watch for timely Legislative Alerts and Updates that we send out during the session.

• Be a Resource. Don’t be afraid to offer your expertise on matters that affect you the most. Write letters or offer testimony to committees when practicable. On certain issues, you are the expert, and you can be a key influencer of policy. Contact information for both committee assistants and committee members are under the Committee tab on the Vermont State Legislature website.

• Follow-up. Legislators read their local newspapers and digital news sources, so use the media. Write an opinion piece. Seek an interview opportunity to get your point across to the public as well as the legislature. Write thank-you notes in the form of a letter to the editor in your local paper.

• Be our Best Friend. Be sure to contact VLCT Advocacy staff with any questions or insights that you have. Let us know when you meet with your legislator, and invite us to a selectboard meeting. We are here to help you!