

VBA Legislative Update – Week 5 February 6, 2025

Lawmakers and Governor Scramble to Respond to Chaos in Washington

Whether it's tariffs, funding delays or cancelations, or new confusing policy directives, lawmakers, community leaders and the Governor are trying to make sense of seemingly senseless changes coming in rapid succession from the White House.

Last week, on the eve of an announced trade war with Canada, Vermont's largest trading partner, the Governor convened an interagency task force to examine the potential consequences of the tariffs that the White House had announced on certain imports from Canada, Mexico and China. Led by Secretary of Commerce and Community Development the group was charged with evaluating the possible affects the proposed tariffs could have on Vermont and identifying any potential responses or upsides. Substantially impacted economic sectors would include energy, housing and food – impacts that would most likely be felt by consumers. Although the tariffs were temporarily delayed, the task force will continue its work.

At the same time, as we have previously reported, Treasurer Mike Pieciak has convened a stakeholder group composed of policy experts, business and community leaders, and Vermont economists to take a broad look at the impacts of federal policy changes on Vermont's economy. The Treasurer's Task Force is assessing the economic impact of the incoming administration's policy changes and advising the Treasurer about federal policy and legal changes, and the opportunities or challenges they create for the Vermont economy, future state fiscal or financial policy, and for Vermonters' households and businesses. Last week, the Task Force hosted an [immigration panel for employers](#). You can follow and participate in the Treasurer's Task Force on the Federal Transition [here](#).

Headlines of Note

[Ways and Means: Legislative Lawyers Are as Busy as Heck](#)

[House gives initial approval to vital Budget Adjustment](#)

[Tariff Pause a Relief for Vermonters Scrambling to Prepare](#)

[Senate bill would regulate use of 'deepfakes' in leadup to Vermont elections](#)

[What USAID funding freeze means for Vermont](#)

[Final Reading: More money earmarked for school PCB cleanup in budget proposal](#)

[Hundreds protest Trump administration outside Vermont Statehouse](#)

VBA Bill Report

Last week, the VBA Government Affairs Committee voted to recommend that the VBA board take the following position on [H.51](#).

Section 1 of the bill would authorize the holder of a fourth-class license to sell the products of not more than eight additional manufacturers or rectifiers. Current law allows

the sale of products of not more than 5 additional manufacturers. **The GAC voted to recommend that the VBA support this provision.**

Section 2 of the bill would authorize a manufacturer of malt beverages that operates a brewery in Vermont or anywhere in the United States to apply for a retail shipping license to sell up to 5,000 gallons of malt beverages (about 161 barrels) per year directly to 1st or 2nd class licensees (bar/restaurant or retail outlet) and deliver the beverages by mail, the manufacturer’s own vehicle, or the vehicle of an employee of a manufacturer, provided that the beverages are sold on invoice, and no more than 100 gallons per month (about 20logs) are sold to any single 1st or 2nd class licensee. Current law applies this provision to wine manufacturers only. **The GAC voted to recommend that the VBA NOT support this provision and that, as an alternative, the VBA advocate for the adoption of a tiered distributors license scheme, to include an option for a distributors license to distribute a limited amount of product for a reduced license fee.**

In the end, committee members felt that allowing easy direct access by out-of-state manufacturers could have unintended consequences by flooding the marketplace with new brands. This would exacerbate the already unlevel playing field that prohibits Vermont manufacturers from direct shipping to many states, states whose manufacturers do have access to Vermont’s marketplace. The committee decided that the recommended alternative could serve to limit out-of-state breweries from easy access to the Vermont marketplace and allow smaller VT breweries the opportunity to self-distribute as they will no longer be paying the same amount as large wholesalers.

No hearings are currently scheduled for these or other bills of interest.

VBA Bill Report – Week 5 2/8/25			
Bill	Sponsors	Description	Status
H 24	Rep. Anne Donahue	An Act Relating To Requiring Retail Businesses To Accept Cash This bill proposes to prohibit a retail business from refusing to accept cash payment.	Committees: House Commerce and Economic Development Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development (01/09/25)
H 45	Rep. Mary-Katherine Stone; Rep. Tiffany Bluemle; Rep. Abbey Duke; Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Bram Kleppner; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Robert Hooper;	An Act Relating To Prohibiting Possession Of Firearms On Premises Where Alcohol Is Licensed To Be Served This bill proposes to prohibit possession of firearms on premises where alcohol is licensed to be served and to require that notice of the	Committees: House Judiciary Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary (01/21/25)

	Rep. Troy Headrick	prohibition be posted at each premises.	
H 51	Rep. Lucy Boyden; Rep. Matthew Birong	<p>An Act Relating To Miscellaneous Amendments To The Statutes Governing Alcoholic Beverages</p> <p>This bill proposes to: (1) authorize the holder of a fourth-class license to sell its products to not more than eight additional manufacturers or rectifiers; and (2) authorize manufacturers of malt beverages to acquire a retail shipping license and ship malt beverages to first- and second-class licensees.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/21/25)</p>
H 110	Rep. Lucy Boyden	<p>An Act Relating To A Reciprocity Requirement For Out-of-state Consumer Shipping Licenses</p> <p>This bill proposes to limit the issuance of out-of-state malt beverage consumer shipping licenses to breweries that are located in states that allow Vermont brewers to acquire consumer shipping licenses.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/28/25)</p>
H 119	Rep. Carolyn Branagan	<p>An Act Relating To The Beverage Container Redemption System</p> <p>This bill proposes to expand the scope of the beverage container redemption system to include cider, hard kombucha, noncarbonated water, and noncarbonated soft drinks. The bill also would increase the deposit for a container from five cents to 10 cents.</p>	<p>Committees: House Environment</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Environment (01/29/25)</p>