

Unemployment Trust Fund Deficit

We support the current draft of S.290 as voted out of the Senate Economic Development Committee under the leadership of Senator Vince Illuzzi. No one foresaw the current economic downturn; we believe that the approach needs to be balanced between employers and employees. Not too long ago, the CV Chamber specifically opposed shifting funds from the Unemployment Trust Fund to job training when some in the legislature asserted that the fund balance was too high.

We oppose removing the employee tax. The extremely small tax on employees is a fair and reasonable part of the overall solution to restoring the fund balance. The employee tax is scheduled to sunset when the fund balance returns to the target level.

We support a balanced approach will more than likely work towards job creation rather than a further collapse of jobs. Employers are faced with burgeoning costs for unemployment insurance; taxable wage base increases, FUTA rate increases and businesses are already struggling.

Vermont's business climate is very fragile, recovery will take time.

Health Care Reform

We oppose spending money on more expensive studies. Vermont is the healthiest state in the U.S. is the leader in health care reform. About 95% of all Vermonters have health insurance from all sources public and private.

We support taking the time to completely analyze and coordinate the provisions of the new federal health insurance reform law. Vermont needs to understand how to best merge the federal health care reform with existing Vermont programs.

We oppose continuing to charge business the Catamount employers assessment AND federal health care assessment.

H 781-Renewable Energy

We support streamlining the permit process for SPEED projects such as the proposed solar array in Williamstown. H.781 makes the seven existing farm methane projects eligible for standard offer contracts, allows developers who receive standard offers to transfer those agreements to utilities, directs the Public Service Board to streamline the Section 248 process for any renewable energy projects with a capacity of 2.2 MW or less, allows any solar energy or net metering project of 2.2 MW or less, including those owned by a utility, to be eligible for the business solar energy investment tax credit, and consolidates environmental and municipal appeals for renewable energy projects before the Public Service Board.

Champlain Bridge

We oppose the proposed PLA for the future construction of the Champlain Bridge. We want to assure that unnecessary work rules do not result in a de facto exclusion of Vermont contractors and workers.

Growth Centers

We support growth centers legislation. We believe that growth centers provide an opportunity for rational economic development in areas with access to existing infrastructure. Such development would benefit our communities and our state economically, environmentally and socially. We support the expansion of growth centers and oppose additional restrictions on growth centers.