

High-level feedback to Tax Structure Commission from Joint Fiscal Office
Obsolete Tax Chapter -received by 12/10/2020

Providing an overview for the chapter and the rationale for focusing on these two taxes

- This section of the report feels very cursory.
- It is unclear how and why the commission chose to focus on these two taxes in this chapter. The chapter might benefit that explains the issue of obsolete taxes and why it's going to focus on these two. Are they the most egregiously obsolete taxes? The two most representative examples? The two that carry the greatest risk for the state if not addressed?
- Both of the selected topics are worthy of discussion, but they lack context and neither section seems to have enough meat on the bone to be useful to policymakers.

Considering where the Commission can provide value

- Policymakers in Vermont, along with others across the country, are keenly aware of this trend and have been proposing various solutions. As currently written, the discussion of gasoline taxes is too short and shallow to add new perspectives or insights. It is unlikely to be seen as an actionable recommendation unless it is significantly expanded.
- The TPP discussion in this chapter feels too in-the-weeds. Also, the key question of a replacement tax gets short shrift. The TPP is widely understood to be outdated and has been targeted for repeal for a long time. It's not news that it is outdated, but no one in Vermont has really studied the subject enough and come up with a replacement.
- Alternatively, if the Commission has a lot on its plate refining the other chapters, it could cut this chapter and focus on making the others as useful as possible rather than being spread thin over those chapters and trying to add value to this one. These topics could still be referenced elsewhere (perhaps the changing landscape chapter?) if the commission wants to make sure they're mentioned.