



VERMONT LEGISLATIVE
Joint Fiscal Office

1 Baldwin Street • Montpelier, VT 05633-5701 • (802) 828-2295 • <https://jfo.vermont.gov>

Fiscal Note

March 19, 2024

Chris Rupe, Associate Fiscal Officer

S.159 – An act relating to the County Governance Study Committee

As recommended by the Senate Committee on Appropriations

Bill Summary

The bill proposes to create a County and Regional Governance Study Committee. The Committee would be comprised of six legislators. Members of the Committee would be entitled to per diem compensation and expense reimbursement for up to 10 meetings.

Fiscal Impact

Per diem compensation and expense reimbursement for the Committee would cost the General Assembly up to \$15,000 in either fiscal years 2025 or 2026.

As recommended by the Senate Committee on Government Operations, Section 1 would appropriate \$50,000 from the General Fund to the Joint Fiscal Office in fiscal year 2025 to contract with one or more consultants to assist with research, preparation of a report, and any other assistance deemed necessary by the Committee. The Senate Committee on Appropriations recommends deletion of this appropriation to instead reflect all appropriations in the fiscal year 2025 appropriations act (Big Bill).

Background and Details

Section 1 proposes to create a County and Regional Governance Study Committee to address local government capacity challenges as well as regional collaboration, resource allocation, and service delivery. The Committee would be comprised of six legislators (three from each body) from geographically diverse regions of Vermont. The Committee would receive the administrative, technical, and legal assistance of the Office of Legislative Operations, the Office of Legislative Counsel, and the Joint Fiscal Office. The Committee would be authorized to contract, through the Joint Fiscal Office, with one or more consultants to assist with research, preparation of a report, and any other assistance deemed necessary by the Committee.

The Committee would be required to deliver a report with its findings and any recommendations for legislative action to relevant committees by November 1, 2025. Members of the Committee would be entitled to per diem compensation and expense reimbursement for up to 10 meetings, which would cost the General Assembly up to \$15,000. These expenses may occur in either fiscal year 2025 or 2026, depending on the timing of the meetings and their respective attendance.

As recommended by the Senate Committee on Government Operations, Section 1 would appropriate \$50,000 from the General Fund to the Joint Fiscal Office in fiscal year 2025 for consulting expenses to support the work of the Committee. The Senate Committee on Appropriations recommends deletion of this appropriation to instead reflect all appropriations in the fiscal year 2025 appropriations act (Big Bill).