

## Government Affairs Committee

I can only assume that by now, everyone in our community is setting their sights on getting back to a more normal way of life and to put this COVID-19 pandemic in the rearview mirror!! All indications are that it might not be that far away. Just recently (4/30/21), the Vermont Department of Financial Regulation (VDFR) responsible for modeling of this pandemic identified a good forecast for Vermonters. Active cases are on the decline, and with Vermont ranking 4<sup>th</sup> in the nation on the vaccine administration percentage rate, Vermont could reach herd immunity by mid-summer! Until then, we just need to keep following proper guidance provided by our health officials until we reach our goal.

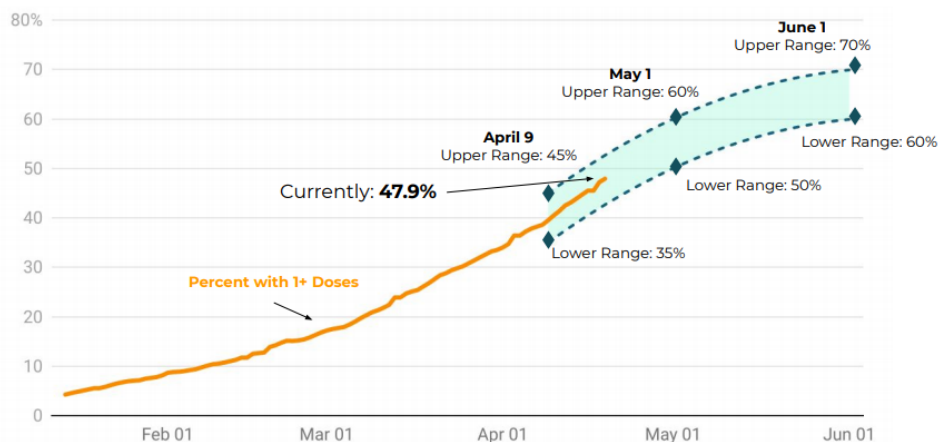
The following are a few images presented by the VDFR at the Governor's 4/20/21 Vermont's COVID-19 Response press conference:

**COVID Infections per 100K in Vermont (7-Day Average)**



Source: Vermont Department of Health—April 19, 2021

## **Vermont Forward Progress to Goal**



Source: CDC — April 19, 2021; ranges represent 1+ dose for all Vermonters; includes doses administered through federal entities

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## **COVID-19 Relief Update – S.10 Bill**

This bill Passed the Senate on 3/31/21 and was sent to the House where it is currently in the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development. During testimony in the Committee, the Vermont Chamber and other business advocates expressed support for cost-saving adjustments to Senate-passed S.10. In its current form, S.10 would increase Vermont UI benefits by an

estimated \$5.2 million in ongoing annual costs for employers. The Vermont Chamber requested the Committee amend the legislation to remove 2020 from the calculation of the UI Trust Fund balance size, which is of paramount importance to Vermont businesses. The Vermont Chamber also suggested the Committee consider using American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funds to support a dependent benefit that could serve both those currently in the workforce and UI claimants.

### **H.315 - Payroll Protection Plan Taxability**

This Bill passed both chambers and was delivered to the Governor's desk for signature on 4/13/21. On 4/17, the chambers received notice that the Governor would not sign off and that the Bill would be allowed to go into effect without his signature.

Even as Vermont lawmakers signed off on the aid package that included PPP taxation, H.315, they maintained that they hadn't settled the matter. Now, they are suggesting they might repeal the new tax. After an outpouring of opposition from many business advocacy organizations and business owners, the Senate Committee on Finance heard additional testimony from business representatives. The testimony responded to the Legislature's recent unexpected decision to enable forgiven Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans in tax year 2021 to be taxable as if they were income. Without legislative action, the recent changes would apply a tax to forgiven 2021 PPP loans as if they were income. Business organizations have requested the Legislature conform to federal treatment of forgiven PPP loans in the tax year 2021, as was the congressional intent of the forgivable loan program.

Be sure to contact your local State Senator or Representative related to this issue with any questions, comments, or concerns.

## **US Government Affairs Updates**

(as reported by ASHRAE.org, 4/15/21, partial topics listing)

### **Us Congressional Activities**

- House Committee Holds Hearing on CLEAN Future Act and Environmental Justice
- Energy efficient Qualified Improvement Property Act Re-Introduced

### **Federal Government Affairs**

- Biden Hosts World Leaders Summit on Climate
- Biden Administration Releases FY2022 Budget Request
- President Biden Meets with Lawmakers to Discuss Infrastructure and Climate Legislation

For detailed information on the above topics, visit the ASHRAE Government Affairs Update website page at:

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Dick Wilcox  
GAC Committee Chair