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October 23, 2026

To: Senator Phil Baruth and Speaker Jill Krowinski
Chair & Vice Chair, Joint Legislative Management Committee
Fr: Senator Ruth Hardy
Chair, Legislative Advisory Committee on the State House
Re: State House Entryway Project

I am writing on behalf of the Legislative Advisory Committee on the State House (LACSH) to relay our recommendations regarding the State House Entryway Project, which is on the agenda for your October 28, 2026 meeting. In our capacity as an advisory committee composed of legislators and experts on historic buildings and artwork, and with the authority to "review, coordinate, and make recommendations on *all activities* relating to the collections and care of art, historic artifacts, and furnishings and the refurbishing, *renovation*, preservation, and *expansion of the building* and its interior" (emphasis added), LACSH has met twice to review current plans for the State House Entryway Project.

The majority of the Committee strongly recommends that the Legislature provide continued, sufficient support for this important project. The Project seeks to improve equitable access, bolster security, and enhance visitor accommodations at the State House, Vermont's premier site of civic engagement & government operations and one of the most visited & beloved buildings in the state. In an era when public trust in government is at an all-time low, a project with the goal of providing safe, welcoming access to the seat of Vermont State government is crucial to fully support and complete.

It's also important that such access be equal for all Vermonters and visitors, regardless of age or disability status. The current entryways do not provide sufficiently equitable, safe, or logical access for all visitors to the State House. Creating an accessibly-designed, aesthetically-pleasing, and secure entryway for all visitors that can be used year-round is essential for such an important civic, historic, and artistic building in Vermont. As such, while we understand that there are many state facilities needs, the majority of the members of LACSH believe that the State House Entryway Project must remain a priority.

In addition, LACSH makes the following recommendations:

1) The Legislature, Friends of the State House, and the Department of Buildings and General Services should seek additional funding sources for the Project to ensure the project can be completed in a manner consistent with the significance of the building. Funding options discussed include various federal funding sources, such as a potential Congressional earmark, as well as private foundation and fundraising efforts.
2) The Project should include a comprehensive communications plan, led by or coordinated with the Sergeant-at-Arms, to ensure that members of the public, visitors, staff, and legislators are fully

informed about the status & benefits of the project and the timeline & impact of construction. Such communication is crucial to ensure smooth continuation of business and tourism at the State House, public buy-in & understanding of the Project, and minimal impact on neighbors & the City of Montpelier. Funding for the communications plan should be added to the Project budget.

3) Improved security at the State House is a central goal of the Project. Project design and implementation must ensure this goal is met, but public discussion of specific security features is not advised. As such, LACSH recommends that relevant committees and project planners discuss security measures, in consultation with the Sergeant-at-Arms and Capitol Police, in executive session.
4) As the Project progresses, LACSH strongly recommends that its jurisdiction to advise on decisions regarding artwork, furnishings, and interior design be respected and that the Committee be provided time to weigh-in on such decisions before they are finalized.
5) Given the significant amount of work being undertaken in the Capitol Complex related to flood recovery and resilience, we recommend that the Project be coordinated with these efforts, to the extent feasible and necessary. However, these other projects should not deter the Entryway Project or become a barrier to its timely completion.
6) The State House is visited by thousands of people each year, so it's important that the "visitor experience" remain central to the Project. As such, LACSH recommends that both an acoustic and light study be conducted to ensure that the Project produces an addition that is acoustically accessible and appropriately lighted for visitors. In addition, we recommend that the architect/interior designer coordinate with the State Curator and possible exhibition designer to best meet the needs of visitor orientation and integration with the State House Interpretive Plan.
7) Given the changes in traffic flow and parking access necessary for the Project, it's imperative that the Project be designed to accommodate all types of vehicles that may need access to the State House, including emergency vehicles, delivery trucks, school & tour buses, passenger vehicles, and bicycles. Further, to ensure safe winter pedestrian access, LACSH recommends the concrete pathway leading to the new entrance be heated to remove snow and ice prior to entry.
8) The Project should prioritize energy efficiency and climate resiliency, including with its heating & cooling system at both peak and partial load, stormwater & snow melt system, and building materials & design.
9) Finally, as the Project planning continues, we recommend ongoing conversations about the use of the new entryway as the main, year-round entrance to the State House, and whether off-session operations and communications should be altered as a result.

Thank you for the opportunity to share these recommendations with you. I am happy to answer questions or provide further information.