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Government Accountability Committee
November 2011 Report

The Government Accountability Committee (the “GAC”) has continued to review quarterly progress reports containing outcomes and measures in eight different areas of state government as required by Nos. 68 and 146 of the Acts of the 2009 Adj. Sess. (2010), and has been taking testimony from Vermont state agencies, as well as other organizations, on how to improve government accountability. The committee was advised in an October 3, 2011 memorandum by its Governor-appointed liaison, Deputy Secretary of Administration Michael Clasen, that the administration is in the process of developing a Strategic Planning Initiative with the goal being “for each department to develop a strategic plan, aligned with their agency’s plan, and ultimately tied to the Governor’s overall plan” and that these plans would include outcomes, measureable goals, and dashboards. Due to the strategic planning process and the fact that many of the department heads, managers, and staff currently involved in that process also faced increased duties and responsibilities as a result of Tropical Storm Irene, the Administration has requested the suspension of the required quarterly progress reports “until the Administration has the opportunity to complete the consolidated Strategic Planning Initiative underway.”

In response, the GAC has accepted the Administration’s request to suspend temporarily the quarterly progress reports with the following conditions:

- The mutual goal of the Legislature and the Administration is an accessible system of data collection that objectively measures outcomes.
- A results-based system will serve any Governor, any General Assembly, and the public by clearly showing progress on all stated priorities.

- The Administration will continue to share updates with the GAC on the progress of the initial consolidated strategic plan, including a draft of the presentation template, and by December 5, 2011, will submit to the GAC a draft of the initial consolidated strategic plan.
- At its meeting on December 5, 2011, the GAC will review the draft plan, and consider if the legislative intent of the quarterly reports required by 2010's Act No. 146 can be achieved with a new format.
- Each agency shall identify possible fundamental changes in agency operation uncovered by Tropical Storm Irene.

The GAC welcomes the news of the Administration's government-wide strategic planning process to develop measurable outcomes in alignment with the Governor's priorities. Beginning in 2008, the legislative branch, via the GAC, has endeavored to collaborate with the executive branch in developing methods to measure the results of policy choices and inform long-term planning. It is GAC's hope that the strategic planning efforts of the Administration and those that emerge from the legislative process will lead to a common process of setting goals and outcomes for Vermont's government.