

# The Financial State of Vermont

As of June 30, 2011



## STATE LIABILITIES EXCEED ASSETS

Assets	\$8,583,481,000
Less: Capital Assets	\$2,586,025,000
Restricted Assets	\$1,298,196,000
<b>Assets Available to Pay Bills</b>	<b>\$4,699,260,000</b>
Less: Bills	\$7,729,401,000
<b>Money Needed to Pay Bills</b>	<b>\$3,030,141,000</b>
<b>Each Taxpayer's* Burden</b>	<b>\$14,100</b>

The state of Vermont has \$8.6 billion in assets, but most of these assets are not available to pay State bills.

The \$2.6 billion of capital assets, such as roads, buildings and land, should not be sold to pay bills. The use of \$1.3 billion of the assets is restricted by law or contract.

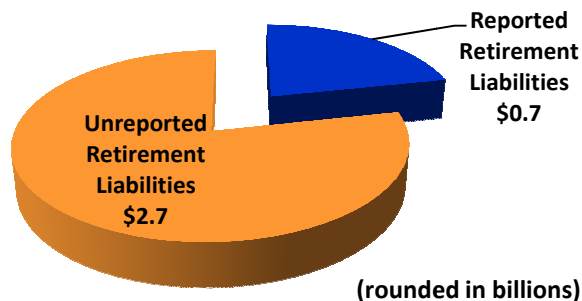
That leaves \$4.7 billion of State's assets available to pay \$7.7 billion of bills as they come due.

The \$3 billion shortfall represents compensation and other costs incurred in prior years that should have been paid in those prior years. Instead these costs have been shifted to future taxpayers.

### Today Each Taxpayer Owes \$14,100

Truth in Accounting's detailed analysis discovered retirement benefits totaling \$3.4 billion have been promised, but not funded. However, because of the confusing way the State does its accounting, only \$734.4 million of these liabilities are on Vermont's balance sheet.

### 78% OF RETIREMENT LIABILITIES ARE NOT CLEARLY DISCLOSED



To knowledgeably interact with—and cast informed votes for—their leaders, citizens need transparency and accurate financial information. The antiquated ways the State budget and financial report are calculated do not provide citizens with the financial information needed to determine government accountability.

This is especially true in relation to employee compensation costs, which include retirement benefits. Because pension and other retirement benefits are not immediately payable in cash, most of these compensation costs are ignored when calculating balanced budgets. Furthermore, the State has set aside only 46 cents to pay for each dollar of retirement benefits promised.

**Truthful budgetary accounting** would include the portion of retirement benefits employees earn in current compensation costs every year they work.

**Accurate accounting requires all real and certain** expenses be reported in the State budget and financial statements when incurred, not when paid.

## THE BILLS THE STATE HAS ACCUMULATED

State Bonds	\$3,805,942,000
Other Liabilities	\$1,361,182,000
Less: Debt Related to Capital Assets	\$832,041,000
Unfunded Pension Benefits	\$1,191,646,000
Unfunded Retirees' Health Care Benefits	\$2,202,672,000
<b>Bills</b>	<b>\$7,729,401,000</b>

Despite the balanced budget requirement, the State has accumulated bonds of \$3.8 billion and other liabilities of \$1.4 billion. The calculation of assets available to pay bills does not include capital assets, so \$832 million of related debt is removed from the calculation of State bills.

Unfunded employees' retirement benefits represent 44% of State bills. These unfunded liabilities have accumulated because State employees have been promised \$1.2 billion of pension benefits and \$2.2 billion of retirees' health care benefits, but the State has not adequately funded them.

Unless these pension and retirees' health care benefits are renegotiated, future taxpayers will be burdened with paying for these benefits without receiving any corresponding government services or benefits.

*Data is derived from the state of Vermont's June 30, 2011 audited Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and retirement plans' actuarial reports.*

*\*Based on the number of Vermont federal tax filers with a tax liability.*