



*1000 River Street
Mail Stop 966B
Essex Junction, VT 05452
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Kari Dolan, Manager
Ecosystem Restoration Program
Department of Environmental Conservation Watershed Management Division
1 National Life Drive, Main 2
Montpelier, VT 05620-3522

Dear Ms. Dolan:

IBM appreciates this opportunity to provide comments on the Draft State of Vermont Proposal for a Clean Lake Champlain, which was released November 20, 2013. IBM is supportive of the State's efforts to better understand phosphorus loading of the lake and to identify remedial actions that can be taken to significantly reduce phosphorus entering the lake in the most expedient and cost effective manner. There are several observations that IBM would like to make concerning the State's proposal. Specifically:

1. The draft document appropriately acknowledges the reality that phosphorus loading to Lake Champlain is dominated by nonpoint sources, and directs its proposed policies toward reducing those sources. Targeting nonpoint sources, particularly critical source areas, for reduction will prove to be the most cost effective and expedient method for improving lake water quality.
2. Wastewater treatment facilities represent only 3.1% of the Vermont phosphorus loading on the lake. There has been significant progress on the part of many of these facilities to reduce their loading of phosphorus. IBM, through research and modification of its waste water treatment process, has reduced its phosphorus discharge by over 70%, well in excess of the 36% total Vermont reduction required for a new TMDL. Further IBM treatment plant reductions would require a large capital investment for minimal environmental return. Where point sources have voluntarily reduced their loading in advance of a new TMDL, their positive contributions to the overall objectives should be recognized in future allocations.
3. Utilization of offsets to shift the cost of nonpoint source remediation to point sources that are regulated by discharge permits would unfairly burden the sector that has already made the largest investments in water quality improvements and currently is the smallest contributor of phosphorus.

4. It is important to understand the scope and cost of required phosphorus reduction projects and policies prior to establishing the proposed Vermont Clean Water Improvement Fund and identifying funding sources. If such a fund is created, each nonpoint source sector should contribute in proportion to its level of phosphorus loading to equitably distribute costs to sources of the problem. Any fee structure should be designed to give credit for and incentivize voluntary reductions and implementation of Best Management Practices. The scope of activities supported by the fund should be limited to measures required to implement the TMDL.

Again, IBM is appreciative of the opportunity to provide feedback on the State's proposal. Please do not hesitate to contact myself or Janet Doyle should you need any clarification on our comments.

Sincerely,

Thomas Jagielski

Thomas Jagielski
Manager, IBM Environmental Programs