



Town of Georgia

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December 30, 2013

Via email .pdf on 01/02/14

Kari Dolan at VT DEC

Jeanne Voorhees at US EPA

Eric Perkins at US EPA

RE: Lake Champlain Phosphorus TMDL Public Feedback Requested

Dear Ms. Dolan, Ms. Voorhees and Mr. Perkins;

I attended a public meeting on Monday, December 2nd, hosted by the EPA, in conjunction with the State of Vermont, to hear discussion regarding proposals for reducing water pollution that is degrading Lake Champlain and its tributaries. The meeting was moderated by the Lake Champlain Basin Program. Polluted stormwater runoff has caused excessive plant and algae growth in some areas of the Lake that turn water murky shades of green, brown, or blue. This pollution also increases the costs of drinking water and wastewater treatment, hurts businesses that depend on clean water such as tourism and recreation, and depresses property values. Excessive polluted runoff also harms local streams and rivers that feed into Lake Champlain.

I brought back all of the materials and documents presented for the Selectboard's review and dissemination. We feel that the Town needs to make clear 1) our position that implementation funds for lake cleanup should be in the hands of local officials, without another layer of federal intervention, 2) the State's action items must address the current phosphorus load on the bottom of the Lake, either by dredging, removal and treatment offsite, or dredging, removal and containment. Page 3 of the PowerPoint presentation shows quite clearly that everything we have currently done has in no way slowed down the upward trajectory; yet you have not presented any solutions for remediation of existing phosphorus, and 3) subjecting Georgia's 63 miles of municipal roads to a stormwater general permit, administered by yet another State agency, will double our highway budget and make no discernible difference in phosphorus runoff, yet further complicate every roadway, culvert, or grading project we attempt to undertake in the future.

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We wish to express our agreement with the statement presented by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns in their *VLCT Legislative Preview 2014 - December 19, 2013*:

The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) officials have been touring the State with a proposal to clean up Lake Champlain. That proposal significantly increases requirements to reduce non-point sources of phosphorus pollution and stormwater runoff as an alternative to further reducing phosphorus discharges from high-performing wastewater treatment facilities. The changes will cost a lot to implement but have little effect on reducing the Lake's pollution. Municipalities are targeted to shoulder much of these alternative treatment costs.

We agree that phosphorus in the Lake is a problem; but we take issue with the statement made at the St. Albans Historical Museum on December 2nd in response to Slide #15 of the PowerPoint presentation: "we have been directed not to concentrate on the costs associated with these commitments, but to show how these goals are achievable". "Saving the Lake" is not a good enough reason to reach back into taxpayers' pockets again, and we believe that unless the costs are discussed transparently, and new funding mechanisms are put in place or other goals are abandoned or re-structured, that is exactly what will happen.

Sincerely,

TOWN OF GEORGIA SELECTBOARD

Deb Woodward
Town Administrator