

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State and EPA Seek Public Input on Lake Champlain Cleanup Efforts

MONTPELIER – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the State of Vermont are seeking public input on a recently released draft proposal to restore Lake Champlain. Also released is a timeline for completing the Lake Champlain restoration plan, which includes a number of opportunities for the public to get involved.

The EPA and the State of Vermont are holding a series of six public meetings in December 2013, to discuss the draft “Proposal for a Clean Lake Champlain” – the State’s proposal for reducing water pollution that is degrading Lake Champlain and its tributaries. The meetings will be moderated by the Lake Champlain Basin Program and held in various communities around the region, with morning, afternoon, and evening sessions in an attempt to accommodate and encourage all interested persons to participate. The public can also submit comments on the draft proposal to the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (VDEC) by January 17, 2014.

Polluted stormwater runoff is causing 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.

“We love our Lake,” said David Mears, Vermont’s Environmental Conservation Commissioner. “It is a source of fun and enjoyment for all of us across the four seasons, and it’s a critical component of our state’s heritage, culture, and economy. Because we love the Lake, we must come together to act now to protect the Lake from pollution.”

Vermont’s Agriculture Secretary Chuck Ross said, “We are proposing solutions that restore our treasured Lake Champlain, and which also preserve our working landscape of farms and forests. We have a rich tradition of tackling tough problems in this state, and I look forward to hearing Vermonters’ thoughts about these solutions and other ideas for how we address the pollution problems facing the Lake.”

“The very things that we do to make our transportation system more resilient can also serve to reduce polluted runoff and help control erosion,” said Transportation Secretary Brian Searles. He echoes Ross and Mears in observing that, “By working together, our agencies and communities across the Lake Champlain region can make investments that can improve our roads, our rivers, and the Lake.”

“EPA is glad to work closely with Vermont agencies and citizens to tackle the challenge of reducing the high nutrient levels that are impacting Lake Champlain,” said Curt Spalding, regional administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s New England office. “During these upcoming meetings, we are eager to hear from Vermonters. We need to take big steps to improve water quality in the Lake, and this is an opportunity for people to help shape a plan to protect their Lake for their kids and grandkids to enjoy.”

Lake Champlain Basin Phosphorus Clean Water Act TMDL Public Meetings, December, 2013		
DATE	TIME	LOCATION
December 2, 2013	2:00pm – 4:00pm	Bliss Room, St Albans Historical Society 9 Church Street, St. Albans
December 2, 2013	7:00pm – 9:00pm	Swanton Municipal Building 120 First Street, Swanton
December 3, 2013	9:30am – 11:30am	Auditorium at the Pavilion Building 109 State Street, Montpelier
December 10, 2013	2:00pm – 4:00pm	ECHO Lake Aquarium and Science Center 1 College Street, Burlington
December 10, 2013	7:00pm – 9:00pm	Founders Room, Middlebury Inn 14 Court Square, Middlebury
December 11, 2013	10:30am – 12:30pm	Fox Room, Rutland Free Library 10 Court Street, Rutland

The EPA and the VDEC have prepared materials for discussion at the public meetings, which are available on web sites listed below. The public may also submit written comments on the draft proposal to Kari Dolan at the VDEC (kari.dolan@state.vt.us) by January 17, 2014:

VDEC Restoring Lake Champlain Page: <http://www.watershedmanagement.vt.gov/erp/champlain/>

EPA information on **Vermont Lake Champlain Phosphorus TMDL**:
<http://www.epa.gov/region1/eco/tmdl/lakechamplain.html>

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