

Chaput Family Farms
2473, Rt. 105 East
North Troy, VT. 05859
Tel: 802-988-2844
cff1991@hotmail.com

Chuck Ross
Secretary of Agriculture
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets
116 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-2901

Re: Testimony – Water Quality

August 12, 2014

Dear Secretary Ross,

There is agreement by all parties that water quality in Lake Champlain, and especially in the St. Albans Bay area, needs to be addressed. What is in question though is the level of contribution of pollutants by all parties who have access to, or utilize the lake.

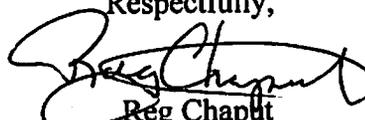
We as dairy farmers understand that we have a role in Lake Champlain's environmental health and we've taken great steps toward correcting issues on our farms toward that effort. Through programs offered by the VT Dept of Agriculture, USDA EQIP and other groups, we've made many improvements and we don't retreat from our obligations. Having said that, I believe that it is important that we as a society understand the source of these pollutants. It would be fruitless to lay blame squarely on the doorstep of Vermont's farmers, only to find out 20 years from now, we were 30% of the problem. No one wins in this finger-pointing exercise.

With that, I suggest two points that need to be considered:

- Through proper monitoring, assure that we have a clear understanding of the source of the pollutants. The old adage of 'measure twice and cut once' truly applies here.
- Seek funding to begin monitoring all farms, regardless of size. A picture of a 50 cow farmer rinsing out his manure tank in the local waterway (an incident that actually happened) is something that does not reflect well on all of Vermont's dairy farmers.

I close by thanking you and the Agency for your efforts in cleaning up Lake Champlain. The LFO and MFO programs have been a major success and we support your efforts in continuing this mission of being a friend to the environment.

Respectfully,


Rég Chaput
Chaput Family Farms