

JUL 22 11 59

July 20, 2014
1997 Hathaway Point Rd.
St. Albans, Vermont, 05478

Agency of Agriculture
116 State Street
Montpelier, Vt. 05620

Dear Sirs:

The following are some of my comments concerning the hearing held by Sec. Charles Ross in St. Albans last Friday, related to the petition of the Conservaton Law Foundation concerning agricultural practices in the Mississquoi Watershed. My personal background involves about 50 years of trying to improve water quality of Lake Champlain, and specifically St. Albans Bay. I have served on the boards of the Lake Champlain Committee, the Vermont Citizens Advisory Committee of the Basin Program, and on two boards of associations related to St. Albans Bay. I do care deeply about our Lake and what has happened to it over this time period

Over the years, many studies (The Phosphorus Problem in St. Albans Bay) have pointed out that about 70% of the nutrient loading of St. Albans Bay comes from agricultural operations (mainly dairy) in our watershed. This excessive nutrient loading has resulted in a serious, and dangerous, algae blooms over these many years. In addition the weed beds have expanded. We have observed extensive planting of corn, mostly non-contoured and with no or minimal buffering. Currently a good example is on Kellogg Road where Mark St. Pierre has planted large amount of corn in this manner. We have observed, at times, almost a sea of liquid manure, spread of fields which is not turned in by the recommended 48 hours. Sometimes it is weeks later. We have observed cows walking in steams within a ¼ mile of St. Albans Bay and told that that is legal by Julie Moore. Often in the Spring, runoff passes right thru camp properties and into the Bay (Georgia Shore Road).

We have long asked for help with these problems with little results. Actually we have been asking for a correction of this problem before Mississquoi even admitted that there was a problem. That they do now, and I wholeheartedly support some positive results from this meeting for them. But, we in the St. Albans Bay Watershed would like these efforts extended to our basin as well. Needless to say, it is long overdue. Lake Champlain is a treasured resource that we should protect. We should be celebrating our Green Mountains and not our 'green lakes'. Yearly we receive about 10 tons of phosphorus to our Bay, of which 7 tons comes from agricultural lands. In addition, we have been advised, that to properly clean up the Bay, the nutrient bed developed over the past 100 years, will either have to be removed or fixated with alum compounds. Before doing this, the nutrient loading would have to be reduced 50%.

In conclusion, I would hope the agricultural community would take a much larger step in correcting these practices that are ruining our Lake. Voluntary programs do not always work, certainly not in this case. Laws are generally made for the minority who cause the programs. But that is why we have laws and realistic consequences for those who violate them.

Sincerely,



Gould Susslin DDS