

January 29, 2024

Honorable Representatives and Senators –

The Vermont Citizens Advisory Committee on Lake Champlain's Future (VT CAC) is a statutory committee formed in 1989 and comprised of 14 Members - 10 Vermont citizens appointed by the Governor, two Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House, and two Senators appointed by the Committee on Committees. The VT CAC is charged with gathering scientific data and information about activities which affect or have the potential to affect water and wildlife in the Lake Champlain Basin region. The committee's charge also extends to considering the impacts these activities have on regional needs for agricultural and industrial development, employment opportunities, and for a high quality environment.

Annually, the VT CAC is required to present a report to the General Assembly which includes an update on the quality of the waters of the lake, pertinent research findings, and an action plan for water quality and fishery improvement measures and enhancements for public use and access to the lake. The committee annually holds 8 – 10 public meetings to gather data and citizen input on these activities and their impacts, and compiles the information into a two-page report and Action Plan. Working with staff from the Agency of Natural Resources and the Lake Champlain Basin Program, and in collaboration with sister entities – The New York Citizens Advisory Committee and Quebec Citizens Advisory Committee (For Québec, the *Organisme de bassin versant de la baie Missisquoi* (OBVBM) acts as the Citizens Advisory Committee) – the VT CAC compiles the information for its annual Action Plan.

Attached is the VT CAC 2024 Action Plan. It reflects findings and recommendations that include some spotlighted by the confluence of the under-resourcing of critical programs, climate change impacts, and contaminants pollution. Those include the need for increased investment in aquatic invasive species spread prevention programs, increased demand for public access to the lake and its tributaries, an amplified prioritization for providing resources to farmers to support a sustainable food system and consistent regulatory enforcement, and intensified concerns regarding human health impacts of multiple chemicals in our waters. And finally, a healthy Lake Champlain ecosystem requires the State to invest in infrastructure, programs, and practices that build community resilience to climate change impacts and restore ecological function. The VT CAC members look forward to presenting this 2024 Action Plan to you in the coming days.

The Vermont Citizens Advisory Committee on Lake Champlain's Future