

February 16, 2024

Subject : State Assistance In Improving Flood Resilience On The Upper West River.

From: Towns of Weston, Londonderry, Jamaica, VT

To: VT House Committee on Environment and Energy, VT Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy, VT Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs.

After the July, 2023 flooding event that caused extensive damage in each of our three towns - as well as in many towns throughout Vermont – Weston, Londonderry and Jamaica have formed a group to coordinate our efforts to improve flood resilience. We recognize that each of our towns has its own unique challenges but at the same time many of the projects and initiatives that we need to undertake rely on common concerns:

Chief among these concerns is conducting a hydrological study of the Upper West River Watershed in order to:

- Identify the available tools to improve flood resilience.
- Analyze the upstream and downstream effects of these available tools including (but not limited to) increasing the hydraulic capacity of bridges and culverts, removing or upgrading dams, floodplain management, including increasing floodplain capacity to store excess water without damaging homes or municipal infrastructure.
- Estimate the cost of the identified tools so we can understand the costs and benefits of each project so informed decisions can be made.

Each of these concerns will require outside expertise from consultants and engineering firms. Identifying these 'suppliers' and obtaining grant money to pay for their work exceeds the abilities of our town selectboards. We need help in this work.

In addition, when the results of the various studies are in, and worthwhile projects are identified (that is, those with the best cost/benefit ratios), no small amount of State and/or Federal funding is going to be required. We are going to need help in identifying funding sources and applying for and obtaining them.

Thank you for your consideration and assistance.

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