

# Notes for Tom DiPietro's Spoken Testimony

## House Fish, Wildlife, and Water Resources Committee

### February 11, 2015

- Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important legislation. I submitted written comments on a previous draft of the bill (1.2) and had a chance to quickly review the revised version (1.3) that was released yesterday. It is great to see that some of the comments provided by myself and others have resulted in changes to the legislation.
- As you know, South Burlington has been in the business of stormwater management for over a decade. The City developed and implemented Vermont's first impervious surface based stormwater billing system in 2005. I've provided a handout that you can review at your leisure. It contains information on what the utility does and how fees are calculated.
- To date, the City has spent over \$13M on stormwater management. We expect to spend significantly more over the next 20 years. Capital improvement projects to comply with existing stormwater TMDLS are anticipated to exceed \$40M in South Burlington. This is a significant amount of money for a community of about 18,000.
- H.35 is poised to be a very significant piece of water quality legislation. Our hope for this bill is that it creates additional partners and opportunities for the City as we move forward with the work of stormwater management and creating a cleaner Lake Champlain. It is also our hope that we'll be able to access new sources of funding to support ongoing and future efforts.
- Our concern with this legislation centers around its potential to hamper local efforts to improve water quality by removing funding from the community or creating additional oversight that would cost us time and money to comply with. For example, the previous versions of this bill contained a \$200 / parcel fee for commercial and industrial properties. We estimate that this fee would have removed approximately \$120,000 worth of funding from South Burlington at the expense of our local program. We'd then have to compete to get these dollars back into the community where it is needed.
- In the current version of the bill, permit fees are being increased to support the State stormwater program. The MS4 permit's new \$10/ impervious acre fee will result in roughly \$20,000 in annual fees paid to the Agency of Natural Resources by the City. I believe that ANR needs additional staff to help manage their new and existing programs and that the legislature is right to look for ways to support them. However, as you continue working on this bill keep in mind the need to support the communities that are already doing much of this work, and those that will be asked to do more as we move forward. How will this legislation support them?
- South Burlington would like to be a partner in your efforts. We'd like to share our experience managing a stormwater program and implementing projects. You can see the water quality improvements that we are making in the attached photos. We'd like to work with you to ensure that this legislation allows us to continue doing what you see here, and that it supports others so that they can do the same thing. Therefore, how can we assist, or what information can we provide to support your efforts to create this legislation?



Clean water from a newly constructed stormwater treatment practice discharging into the turbid waters of Potash Brook.



Stormwater runoff as it enters a stormwater treatment system (left), halfway through the system (center) and at the outlet (right) before discharging to Potash Brook.