



Vermont State House of Natural Resources, Fish, and Wildlife
C/o Representative Dean, Chair
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

April 19, 2018

Dear Members of House Natural Resources, Fish, and Wildlife,

I want to thank you for making time for the delegation from Rutland to make our presentation to your Committee on Thursday, April 12th.

Representative Ode asked me a question after the presentation about “priorities” when the environment and the economy appear to be at odds with one another when Act 250 decisions are being contemplated. I know I am paraphrasing the question, but I believe I understand the essence of it. I did not answer with a good explanation of my beliefs and I ask for your indulgence while I revisit the question.

I do not believe that the Act 250 process is designed to set environmental standards. I believe the Act 250 process is in place to see that applicants have addressed our environmental standards and that their plans are in compliance with those standards. The provisions of Bill S.665, which we were addressing, have no stipulations which in any way weaken or erode our environmental guidelines. The bill addresses ways in which the Act 250 process can be more efficient and predictable.

For instance, assuming that a permit from the Agency of Natural Resources is sufficient to meet the requirements of the Act 250 process, we are placing that decision in the hands of the experts and have limited the adjudication of that decision to one process. Doing so does not erode our standards in any way. It makes the process more timely and gives the applicant assurance that once he or she had received an agency permit that he or she can assume that the matter had been settled.

The State of Vermont should have, and does have, stringent environmental standards. As one who has sailed on Lake Champlain every summer for over 25 years, the quality of its waters is important to me. I made the decision to continue to live in Vermont, as opposed to taking another opportunity, because of the value that I place on that experience. I want to see that nothing denigrates the condition of one of our most beautiful Vermont resources. I support S.665 because I believe it aids in job creation without diminishing our environmental standards.

Thank you for your consideration of my explanation of my position on this matter.

Sincerely,

Lawrence G. Jensen

Lawrence G. Jensen
Chair of the REDC/Chamber Public Policy Committee
President of the College of St. Joseph

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