



ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

*We worship in Word and Sacrament,
care for God's creation, serve people
in need, and respect differences.*



802.862.8866

95 Allen Road
So. Burlington, VT 05403
www.alcvt.org

April 27, 2019

Vermont House Committee on Ways and Means

Rep. Janet Ancel, Chair

Rep. William Canfield, Vice Chair

Rep. Johannah Donovan, Ranking Member

Rep. Peter Anthony

Rep. Scott Beck

Rep. Patrick Brennan

Rep. Cynthia Browning

Rep. James Masland

Rep. Robin Scheu, Clerk

Rep. George W. Till

Rep. Samuel Young

Dear Representative:

We understand that the clean water funding bill (S.96) has passed out of the House Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife Committee on a strong 9 - 1 vote, and that it is now on the way to Ways and Means, your committee.

I am writing as a member of Ascension Lutheran Church, South Burlington, to encourage you to pass this bill out of your committee with a dedicated funding mechanism so we can finally move forward to clean up Vermont's waters. Our church is a *Watershed Discipleship Congregation*, teaching love and respect for our waters and all creation, in 2017 we focused on the Lake Champlain watershed.

At a Water Policy Forum in Montpelier, earlier this year, we heard from Dan Barlow, of Businesses for Social Responsibility, how important clean water is to Vermont businesses. Wendy Knight, commissioner of the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing, reported that water and winter sports tourism makes up a large percentage of our \$1.8 Billion tourism industry. And, Nancy Lynch, of the Vermont Association of Realtors, spoke about how property values on our rivers and lakes are highly affected by water quality.

So you know and we know how important water quality is to the Vermont brand. For us it is the very embodiment of Creation, central to many traditions. For all of us clean water is for drinking, swimming, fishing, boating, renewing. Yet, since 1610, when Champlain traveled down the pristine lake named after him, humans have embarked on endeavors that steadily degraded water quality to the point where we now have to act immediately to reclaim it.

Our agencies are ready to lead, workers are waiting for good jobs, citizens are ready to volunteer, but you need to act to establish a structure and reliable funding stream so work can begin. Please don't let another year go by without real action.

Sincerely,

Marcia Gustafson
161 Austin Dr., #116
Burlington, VT 05401

P.S. I am enclosing a letter to the editor that I wrote and was published in *Aeren Day* on 3/28/18 - just over a year ago. I was concerned then about a stable source of funds for cleaning up Vermont's water. My concern grows as time passes... we must establish a long-term revenue stream now.

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NEWS + OPINION » LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MARCH 28, 2018

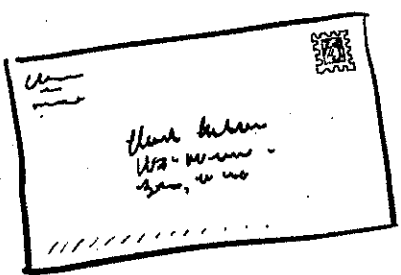
Letters to the Editor (3/28/18)

By SEVEN DAYS READERS

Savor the Snow

I know that your Feedback column is filled with important news and opinions, but I just wanted to say — since you've basically become Vermont's paper of record — that we should never forget how beautiful the month of March 2018 was. Here along the spine of the Greens, we had one perfect day after another: endless bright sun, brisk cold, deep snow. I imagine the skiing was as good elsewhere as it was at Breadloaf, but it couldn't have been any better. Given the progress of climate change and the parlous state of global politics, who knows how many more stretches like this we'll get — all the more reason not to take a single day for granted.

Bill McKibben
RIPTON



Water's Worth

[Re "Treading Water: Vermont's Pools Are Going Nowhere Fast on Clean Lakes," February 7]: Some of Vermont's lakes and rivers have been showing up at the emergency room without health insurance. It's bad. We all pay a high price when it gets to emergency status. Vermont needs to start now in paying a realistic annual premium for health insurance for our water ecosystem.

It's more costly to buy insurance when there are preexisting conditions, but we're lucky because we know that the overall tab in need of new revenue is about \$1.3 billion over the next 20 years, as described in the Clean Water Report issued in January 2017 by the Office of the State Treasurer. The report also identifies many potential long-term revenue sources to pay for the prevention and treatment required to clean up our waters throughout the state.

If we don't make a treatment plan now and ante up the annual premiums to pay the \$1.3 billion, we could well find ourselves paying catastrophic costs. And the toll would be more than financial. Water is essential to life. Clean drinking water is at risk in some communities if we don't start taking preventive action and paying for treatment now.

Marcia Gustafson
BURLINGTON