

Town of Poultney

March 19, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

The slate quarry industry has been an integral component of the fabric of Poultney since the mid-1800's. Many slate quarry businesses are multi-generational entities, having passed from generation to generation. For many people involved in the slate quarrying business it is more than just business, it is a way of life.

Like much of Vermont, the Town of Poultney is comprised of many hard-working people. There are hundreds of people that live in Poultney, and surrounding towns, whose livelihoods depend on slate quarrying. There are folks harvesting, and manufacturing slate products, and there are many businesses that support slate quarrying activities.

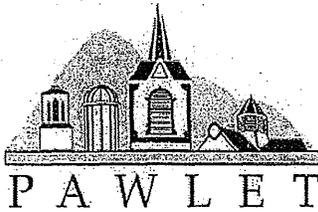
In addition, the Town of Poultney works very closely with many of the slate quarries, and relies on them to supply materials for infrastructure improvements, i.e. road repairs, and upgrades, often at lower costs, and sometimes at no cost. The loss of such resources could negatively impact already taxed highway budgets.

With the pending closure of Green Mountain College, Poultney is preparing for a transitional period. It would be difficult to imagine the additional financial, social, and historical hardship for Poultney should slate quarries be forced to shutter.

Very Truly Yours,

Paul A. Donaldson

Town Manager, Poultney, Vermont



TOWN OF PAWLET

Chartered 1761
122 School Street
Pawlet, VT 05761

April 9, 2019

Act 250 Commission
Attention: Study Committee
Vermont State House
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

Dear Commission Members,

For nearly two centuries the quarrying of slate and the processing of the stone into useful building materials has been an economic cornerstone for the Town of Pawlet and our neighboring towns. Most of these quarries have been family owned for generations.

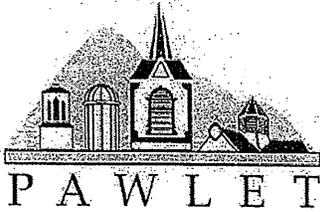
“With the building of the Rutland and Washington Railroad in 1851 through Rupert, West Pawlet and Granville, N.Y., many quarries were opened to mine the prolific slate in the area which was processed into slate roofing shingles, flagging and other products”

Pawlet Historical Society – History by John Malcolm

Still active today and still, in many cases, family owned and operated these businesses contribute to the economy of our Town and to the State of Vermont. But with higher cost of labor, taxes, material and equipment, not to mention the increase of restrictions on operations dictated by heavy regulations, profitability of the local quarrying industry has suffered. And still owners and operators struggle to produce and distribute world-wide an exceptional product that makes Vermont a recognized leader in providing quality stone to the building industry.

The Town of Pawlet salutes our quarry owners and operators for their conscientious and diligent adherence to good practice standards of manufacture and for their strict adherence to the regulations of Act 250. Indeed, the Town is supportive of the role this legislation has played in helping to preserve the natural wellbeing of the environment we all depend on for the quality of our lives and for the futures of our children. However, we must state that without relief or exemption from more restrictive regulations our quarry businesses will become unprofitable and may not survive the enactment of these regulations.

We strongly feel that the state legislature can find a solution that will support responsible environmental controls as well as work cooperatively with the quarry industry, so that the natural environment receives the protection it deserves and the quarry owners and operators can continue to maintain a profitable industry in the State of Vermont while exercising responsible stewardship of the land that supports that industry.



TOWN OF PAWLET

Chartered 1761
122 School Street
Pawlet, VT 05761

The Town of Pawlet urges the State legislature to develop a responsible multi-lateral set of environmental guidelines that will satisfy the more stringent requirements of the Act 250 expansion and provide protection for the important slate and stone industry that has benefitted the Vermont economy for the past 150 years.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Harry Van Meter".

Harry Van Meter, Chairman
Pawlet Planning Commission

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Beecher".

Michael Beecher, Chairman
Pawlet Select Board

TOWN OF WELLS

P.O. Box 585

WELLS, VERMONT 05774

(802) 645-0486

8 April 2019

Dear Sirs and Madams:

The slate quarry industry has been both a very important business component and a long time tradition in the town of Wells. Many residents of our town have in the past or still do own or work in quarries. Many other businesses sell the various products that these quarries manufacture. Many homes and other kinds of buildings are constructed using slate products such as beautiful roof architectures to slate floors, countertops and outside patios.

In the last several years, Wells has received gracious donations from several slate companies. When we needed a new town office there was a generous cash donation to the town as well as other donations of roofing material and slate tiles for floors. When back roads were in need of base material, several quarry owners have given their time, effort and materials to support our cause so that roads would be passable by emergency vehicles, school busses and local residents. With their support we are able to keep our road budget in check each year.

The town of Wells would like to see better communication between state committees and the residents of Western VT towns before any decisions are made to alter, or to close down this industry. We can not afford to loose this part of Vermont's history, culture and way of life.

Respectfully yours,



Wells Select Board
Ronald A. Bremer
Chairman of Select Board

April 9, 2019

To: The Vermont State Legislature and Governor Phil Scott,

As decision makers whose choices have dramatic impacts on the personal and professional lives of Vermont Residents you probably already know that Vermont has the smallest economy in the United States. The Green Mountain State is the second least populated state in the Union and suffers from business costs that are 12% above the national average. The state's economic outlook, according to Forbs and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, is weak with job and income growth expected to remain flat in the state. And, compared to the rest of the nation, our state will badly lag behind the rest of the country over the next five years.

Knowing all of this it is hard to believe that our State Leadership is considering amending the ACT 250 law in such a way that will destroy Western Rutland County's Slate Industry. This change will, in the best case scenario, further obstruct economic growth in the State, and worst case, cost the State hundreds of Jobs and millions of dollars in economic activity. Sadly, as is the case so often, the burden of this change will be borne by the poorest communities that just do not have the resources to cope with this type of government intrusion into their already established businesses.

The Town of Fair Haven has been adversely affected by Act 250 in the last 14 months with 2 businesses choosing to not build in town because of how onerous and expensive the Act 250 process can be. This has cost the Town thousands in tax revenue and lost jobs and any increased restriction on slate quarries will do more harm to our already weak economy.

With this in mind, we the Fair Haven Board of Selectmen this 9th day of April 2019 do strongly urge you to not make Act 250 more restrictive and allow our slate quarries to continue operating as they have been since Act 250 was passed in 1970.

Sincerely,

Fair Haven Board of Selectmen



Jay M. Swann


John L. Leland



Len France



Town of Castleton

Dear Sir's and Madam's,

Slate quarries in Vermont are not just job producers, they are a tradition. The western portion of Rutland County has a long rich history of slate quarrying, providing beautiful products that cover our rooftops and floors and stand the test of time. The owners of quarries in western Rutland County are environmentally conscious landowners and we are disappointed that nobody from our legislative body called our small town of 4,717 people to ask how these latest Act 250 attacks would impact our Town, the second largest in Rutland County. We are disappointed that we were not able to have a civil conversation with you about the pride we have in our local slate quarries and depend on them for jobs and the wonderful products they produce. We are disappointed that local businesses can be regulated out existence and local communities like Castleton are overlooked and get no vote in these restrictive and job-killing decisions.

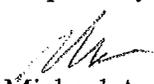
If you look up the history of central/western Vermont, including Castleton, Fair Haven, Hubbardton, and Poultney, you will see a rich history in the slate industry. Some of the architecture in the area is constructed from the beautiful green and purple slate from our quarries.

In times of need, these business owners and employees are there to support their communities in many ways. Many are philanthropic and step up when their communities are in need. This spring has really wreaked havoc on our dirt roads. We were really in need of assistance to repair the majority of our dirt roads so emergency vehicles, school buses, and commuters could travel the roads safety. Many roads were impassable and several of our local quarry owners reached out to offer their assistance. In one instance, a local quarryman provided a truck and driver so our short-handed highway department could make necessary and timely repairs to get our dirt roads to passable condition. They opened early and stayed late so work could continue to improve the conditions in their community. This is not the practice of every business owner, but this is how our local quarryman treat their communities.

We ask that before any job-killing restrictions are placed on Vermont's quarry owners, that you take some additional time to talk with communities like Castleton, and visit our community to see firsthand how much these quarries are part of our history and a source of pride. We cannot afford to continue to lose jobs and negatively impact our community.

We strong urge you to halt any further action in your committee until you have spoken to quarry owners and local communities to educate yourselves on how these quarries are an integral part of our communities and our vitality.

Respectfully yours,


Michael A. Jones
Town Manager


James Leamy
Select Board Chairman



Town of Hubbardton
1831 Monument Hill Road – Hubbardton
Castleton, VT 05735

Tel: 802/273-2951

Fax: 802/273-3729

March 18, 2019

Dear Sirs and Madams:

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to express concerns I have regarding the closing of the local Slate Quarries serving the towns of Vermont.

Vermont has the long-standing tradition of its people being helpful, neighborly, and self-reliant. This tradition extends itself to the business owned and operated by Vermonters, especially those providing product and services to its people.

As a recent example, this year's mud season is worse than anyone has seen in years. In our town, it reached emergency status. We had to have access to stone to open the roads and we had to have it NOW! Thankfully, we have a slate quarry in a neighboring town. The owner/operator was gracious enough to open beyond his normal operating hours, including days he would be closed, to accommodate us. What other states would do this? so readily? so willingly?

The concern that emergency services would not be able to reach our people was real. The roads were not passible by car and were difficult with many of the new crossover SUVs. We really didn't have the option to wait and our neighbor knew that and was not willing to make us wait. The proximity of his slate quarry to our location was paramount. It shortened the amount of time it took our trucks to dump and haul loads. Faster than using a quarry in a different town never mind a different state.

Please, when you take the time in your committee to review and talk about the decision to close local slate quarries, consider what this is doing to Vermont. Can we really afford to lose more of our local businesses? Can we afford to lose access to local services? Can we afford to lose the face of who and what Vermont is?

I strongly urge you to NOT close the Slate Quarries of Vermont. Our roads will suffer, our people will suffer and in the long run, tourism will suffer.

Sincerely,

Janet Morey
Hubbardton Road Commissioner/ Vice-Chair Select Board