

Members of the House Natural Resources Committee;

First, let me thank Rep. Morgan, Rep. Smith, Rep. Terenzini and especially Vice Chair Lefebvre, for recognizing the reality that when work is assigned to employees of state government, it needs to actually be paid for.

I know how difficult it is to keep track of all of the moving pieces this time of year, and operating virtually makes that all the more difficult. Having said that there were several inaccuracies and misunderstandings made during the testimony on Rep. Lefevre's bill back amendment which I would like to clear up.

- 1) It was suggested that the current bill back language already in statute makes this language unnecessary.

Current bill back authority is so cumbersome, difficult to administer and limited, that it is extremely difficult and costly to administer. Doing the necessary tracking, estimating and billing justification, and the limitations of when it can be used, renders it virtually unusable. That is why we have not used it since the revisions were made several years ago and have instead paid for this work (between \$170,000-\$250,00 depending on the year) through other sources such as federal excise tax revenue and license funds. The Lefevre amendment essentially takes current bill back authority and makes it workable in a practical way, which is all the more important as Act 250 work has grown over the years and as the Legislature is poised to significantly increase the volume of this work.

- 2) It was suggested that the Administration has not proposed a solution to the issue of needing to fund this work.

The Administration, specifically ANR, was the original source of the bill back language included in the House version of this bill. It was included in early drafts of the proposal put forward by the Agency, and has consistently and actively been supported by the Administration ever since in both the House and Senate. The Lefevre amendment is a slightly tweaked language of the proposal which was already considered by and supported by the entire House.

- 3) It was suggested that the Committee did not have time to consider the Lefevre amendment.

This language is very similar to the language already approved by the entire House and removed by the Senate.

- 4) It was said that minor projects can take as much time and effort as a major project.

While theoretically possible, in practice it is extremely rare for a minor project to take substantial resources. Therefore, Rep. Lefevre's amendment to limit bill back to majors seems reasonable, although we have supported versions that took both approaches.

Thank you for allowing me to correct the record.

Louis

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read "Louis", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Louis Porter

Commissioner

Vermont Fish and Wildlife