



ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

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



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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: *Ancel,*

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,

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