

Good Morning,

My name is Rob Evans, and I'm the President of the Franklin Watershed Committee, Vice President for the Lake Carmi Campers Association and a member of the TMDL Coordination Committee. I have been the owner of a camp on Lake Carmi for 14 years and have raised my (3) children on Lake Carmi. I am proud to say that I have established some wonderful friendships with other camp families, with members of the Franklin Select Board, with members of the Franklin Community, our farming families, and many state water quality professionals with whom I have worked.

I first want to say thank you, for supporting our clean water efforts on Lake Carmi. While I know that maintaining clean water is, and will continue to be a state priority, we are grateful for your continued support for our clean water initiatives. Over the past several years, it seems like Lake Carmi has been ground zero for the state's clean water work. The extensive algae blooms we experienced several years ago, the public outcry, the fear and anxiety over the health risks associated with these blooms, the tensions between our campers, town residents, farming community and elected officials boiled over into some very heated debates about how to manage this critical clean water dilemma.

While we recognize that we are in for a long term battle to achieve our clean water goals, I am happy to say that working together, we have found common ground and achieved many good outcomes as a result of our collaborations. Last year we saw the installation of our whole lake aeration system, designed to limit the adverse affects of the legacy phosphorous releases we have been experiencing in our lake. Mr. John Tucci will speak more to the system and the results of the system being in place later during

this testimony. It was no small task to get this system installed. Miles of rubber tubing now rests on the bottom of our lake. The state park and one camp resident now house two huge compressors designed to pump air into the system, some town officials will soon be trained in the maintenance and operation of the system, and DEC, Fish and Wildlife and other partners are closely monitoring the impacts of the system on our lake.

While we have not always agreed on process, I am very pleased with the level of engagement the state and our aeration contractor has had with our clean water stakeholders. On Wednesday night, the state provided us with an update on the effectiveness of the aeration system and it looks to have achieved exactly what it was designed to do. While this system was not designed to fix our problem, it gives us hope that our dying lake has a chance to fix itself with our continued support and attention.

I am every encouraged with the work being done by our farming community and their partnership with UVM extension. We have a manure injection system in our watershed that we hope will provide some broadcast manure spreading relief to our watershed. Our farmers have increased their cover cropping in the watershed and continue to pursue agriculture alternatives that we hope will result in a significant decrease of phosphorus loading in our lake. Once again, while we may not always agree, through open dialogue, a willingness to listen and learn from each other and faith that we are all working to achieve the same goal, we have made some significant progress.

I am also pleased to say that we are encouraged with the increased scientific data gathering that will be taking place in the lake. We feel it is extremely important to get the facts that will help drive future clean water

initiatives. Working with our state partners, we need to continue to learn about the adverse health impacts associated with these harmful blooms. To be clear about what we are facing, last year we had over 30 days of beach closings due to these harmful blooms.

While we continue to make significant financial and personal investments at Lake Carmi, now is not the time to let our foot off the gas. We have a real chance to make a difference and highlight how when working together, we really can make a difference. We need to prioritize the following:

- We need to ensure that all the critical pathway projects associated with the Lake Carmi Lake in Crisis response plan get accomplished.
- We need continued assistance to our farming community to provide financial support, equipment and training to assist in decreasing the negative farming impacts on our lake
- We need continued improvement of our state, local and private roads. We need AOT to be a partner at our TMDL coordination committee meetings on a regular basis.
- We need continued support for the significant electrical costs associated with running the aeration system
- We need the VT Department of Health to continue to examine the health related issues associated with exposures to blue green algae. We need them to continue to investigate mass notification systems to effectively inform the public of their location and protective actions to taken
- We need to consider a broadcast manure spreading ban in our watershed. We know that we have tributaries that feed our lake that are still bringing massive amounts of phosphorous into our lake during major weather events...

- We need one state agency to be the single point of contact for water quality in the state. We continue to battle the issue of transparency and “passing the buck” between state agencies for the accountability, oversight and management for clean water in this state.

I know that many of you were at the Lake Carmi Ice Cream Social a few weeks ago. Besides the great taste of ice cream, I hope you took note of all who were standing at the table, working together for clean water at Lake Carmi. We had campers, town officials, representatives from DEC, the state parks, Ag, our farming community, UVM extension and others, working to get the word out about the good work being done at Lake Carmi.