



TO: Senator Robert Starr

Cc: Senate Committee on Agriculture

FROM: Brian Carpenter, Chair; Vermont Dairy Producers Alliance

DATE: April 14, 2022

RE: Oppose H.466; An act relating to surface waters and interbasin transfers

VDPA appreciates the effort Senate Natural Resources and Energy have put forth to amend H.466 as passed by House. VDPA still does not support H.466 with similar concerns of other agricultural groups.

We ask that your committee seek the necessary data from all industries about surface water withdrawals in Vermont as a first step in analyzing water usage. Allowing a permit program to be developed when you do not have sufficient data does more harm than good. Vermont farmers have made huge investments in improving water quality and these investments have shown tremendous results.

If the committee moves forward with this bill, we ask for the following:

- **Require reporting only** without creating a permit program. This information would help the Legislature understand how watersheds are impacted and if a permit program is needed.
- **Increase the threshold for required reporting** as in neighboring states:
 - New York Agriculture - 100,000 gallons per day/3,000,000 in a 30-day period
 - New Hampshire Agriculture - 20,000 gallons per day, averaged over any 7-day period, 600,000 gallons over any 30-day period
 - Maine – All agricultural facilities that registered or reported their existing withdrawals of 100,000 gallons a day

We respectfully request that this bill only require reporting at 50,000 gallons and then see what the data shows.

The most recent proposed amendment requires the Secretary of Natural Resources to conduct public input and outreach with interested parties. This should be done before any new permitting system is considered. Additionally, the amendment needs to include a diverse group of farmers, not simply a representative from the Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets.