

Honorable Representatives and Senators –

Thank you for hearing testimony from the Vermont Citizens Advisory Committee on Lake Champlain's Future (VTCAC) related to the findings and recommendations in the [2024 Lake Champlain Action Plan](#) on January 30th and 31st. Responses to some of the questions that emerged during the VTCAC's testimony are summarized on the following pages. The VTCAC greatly appreciates your time and commitment to supporting a thriving Lake Champlain ecosystem that is resilient to climate change. Please be in touch with any other questions.

The Vermont Citizens Advisory Committee on Lake Champlain's Future

Invest in Natural and Developed Infrastructure for Resilience

Q. Speaker Krowinski requested the statistics related to 2023 rainfall and flood impacts.

A.

- Lake Champlain July 9 & 10, 2023 Flood impacts
 - 4.5"+ precipitation over 2 days
 - More than 200 billion gallons of water were delivered to Lake Champlain
 - The amount of phosphorus delivered was likely more than half of the annual Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for phosphorus
 - 33 municipal wastewater systems and 19 community water systems were impacted
 - The lake level reached 98.3' on July 23
- Another significant rain event occurred on December 18th. The lake level increased 2' to reach 99.1', which was higher than the lake level in early May 2023
- 2023 rainfall statistics for a Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Community in Central Vermont:
 - Annual Average Rainfall for the community: 41"
 - 2023 Annual Average Rainfall: 60.02"
 - 69% of rainfall was recorded after July 10
 - 38 events were greater than 0.5" of rain

Q. Rep. Sheldon asked for suggestions about what it looks like to staff the Vermont Rivers Program at capacity.

A. 2 new positions for the Agency of Natural Resources in the Flood Hazard Area Program and 2 new positions in the River Corridor Program.

Invest in Aquatic Invasive Species Spread Prevention

Q. Rep. Leavitt asked a question related to boat inspection stations and decontamination units including how many the committee would want for Lake Champlain, aquatic invasive species spread prevention staffing needs, and the cost of decontamination units.

A. The Lake Champlain Basin staffing needs for aquatic invasive species are for four FTEs. There are currently four FTEs, but they are funded under various sources including some coming through the Lake Champlain Basin Program. This leaves a gap in aquatic invasive species coverage in other parts of the state. High pressure hot water decontamination units cost ~\$10,000-15,000. The VTCAC recommends at least two boat inspection stations with high pressure hot water decontamination units be available in high profile locations on interstate 89 and interstate 91.

Support Sustainable Agriculture and Consistent Regulatory Enforcement

Q. Rep. Stebbins asked how many farmers participated in the pay for performance programs.

A. Vermont Pay for Performance, a performance-based phosphorus reduction program, currently has 55 actively enrolled farm participants. VAAFPM recently received an additional 22 applicants seeking to participate in the program this year and expects to end up with 73-75 farms with room for more farms next year. The program has room for roughly 105 farms, and

farms who participate have remained in the program. VAAFM was awarded a \$7 million grant award from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) under the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Alternative Funding Arrangement (RCPP-AFA) program. This funding supported two seasons (2022 & 2023) of farm participation and will support two more seasons (2024 & 2025) until the funding award expires in 2026. VAAFM is planning to seek additional funding to continue supporting this program in the future (Nina Gage, Personal Communication). Outreach for this program was conducted through VAAFM, Conservation Districts, and other partners. The Vermont Association of Conservation Districts holds the contract to facilitate and oversee the program. For follow-up questions related to this topic, please contact Nina Gage, VAAFM Water Quality Assistant Director, nina.gage@vermont.gov.