

I am responding to the budget cuts to DEC in next year's budget. I am a long time resident of Caledonia County and a board member and lake owner on L. Averill. I have been active in working to monitor and protect our lakes from the increasing destruction caused by shoreline erosion, AIS, poor stewardship of our lakes and ponds and decreased funding for protection. The protection of our lakes and ponds-due to poor funding- has relied on volunteer effort and committment. That includes not just the community but the understaffed DEC.

Mission driven work is only sustainable for a short period of time. Burn out is what we are dealing with in our healthcare system and what you will soon be dealing with in conservation of our beautiful lakes and ponds.

Attention and care to this current situation can only be acheived by funding those positions best suited to address these issues.

The Lakewise Program educates landowners in the best practices to support the health of our lakes. No one else is doing that! As we all know education is the key to positive change. This program has grown in use since it's inception. We are all beginning to realize that the community is responsible for the health of our waters and that what we have here is VT is under threat of being degraded.

I implore you to continue to fund DEC at it's required level instead of the aggressive cuts outlined in the budget forcing the DEC to cut positions.

Susan Gresser-Caledonia County