

Nate Biscotti

From: Martin LaLonde
Sent: Friday, March 28, 2025 8:16 AM
To: Nate Biscotti
Subject: Fw: [External] Bill S.45

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Representative, Chittenden 12, South Burlington, VT
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
Chair, House Ethics Panel
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From: Laurinda Poirier-Solomon <laurindavt@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 11:50 AM
To: Martin LaLonde <MLaLonde@leg.state.vt.us>
Subject: [External] Bill S.45

[External]

I am writing in opposition to the bill S.45.

I am a 4th generation Vermonter, who comes from a family of farmers and now an owner and taxpayer residing on Lake Champlain.

I write with two voices: a voice that supports enhancing *healthy* farming practices WHILE protecting our greatest resources: the waters of Champlain, rivers, streams and the land itself.

I grew up in Vermont when there were more cows than people. When small farms could sustain a living and were valued members of a community. My great grandfather, grandfather and uncle were farmers. My grandfather taught me the value of respecting and protecting the land while farming.

I was one of those Vermonters who grew up thinking "*oh those people on the lake, outsiders, they are just complainers. If they don't appreciate farming they should not have moved here. Poor farmers are being blamed!*" It was an uninformed and unaware point of view.

Now I live on the lake and have seen how some farmers, not all, blatantly ignore the rules and regulations that protect that lake. I have witnessed the quality of the lake deteriorate from one such farmer, my neighbor here in Addison County. I have seen the erosion of land and expanding underground streams cause washouts on properties.

If there is not a voice to counter such practices, what will happen to the lake and streams? There are not enough state regulators to monitor and hold such farmers accountable. It takes a community to

raise children. It takes a community to maintain rules and regulations via feedback and lawsuits. It takes a community to protect the lake and land.

This is not a black and white issue.

Yes there are arrogant out-of-state landowners here in Vermont. But most people of these landowners moved here because they loved the bucolic nature of Vermont. Most people accept the nature of farming with the mowing cows, and occasional smells. And all pay taxes.

And yes there farmers with environmentally sound practices. But not all. At least for us in Addison County there is one family that I know of that utilizes farming practices that are extreme. Fields burnt every spring with pesticides, the manure beds seeping over, trees cut down at will leading to runoff. They have disregarded the law. They scoff at rulings from the court. They pretend not to have money to fix the issues, while buying up more property and fielding more trees. If it wasn't for neighboring landowners the impact of their unwise, environmentally unsafe practices would be far greater.

When does that end? If our voice, as taxpayers, doesn't matter? Then what? This bill should not pass.

In conclusion:

How can we as a state help farmers and landowners do the right thing? What support systems need to be put into place so *healthy farming practices* as my grandfather taught me, can be instituted such that the environment and the farmers and the landowners can co-exist? People - farmers *and* landowners - need to be held accountable, not just on paper but truly accountable for injunctions, honoring community and state regulations. We need to have the state able and willing to negotiate problems when this does not occur.

As a landowner, a taxpayer and a Vermont who loves Vermont and its historic farming communities, **I am asking you to oppose this bill and create a means by which all voices are heard and systems put into place that honor our land and our waterways.**

Thank you.

Laurinda Poirier-Solomon

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