



Barre City Police Department

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Larry E. Eastman, Jr.
Deputy Chief of Police

February 6, 2026

Chair Waston, Vice Chair Williams, and Members of the Senate Natural Resources & Energy Committee,

I am writing in support of Senate legislative bill S.224 regarding delegating authority to a municipality to regulate the use of a public water that is used as a municipality's public water source. The Thurman Dix Reservoir is a public water located in the Town of Orange which serves as the City of Barre's public water source. The City of Barre's policy for recreational fishing use of the Dix Reservoir allows for fishing from the shoreline in designated locations only. However, the policy disallows the use of watercraft, ice fishing and the use of baitfish. These prohibitions are designed to maintain a safe public water supply without the possibility of contaminants entering the supply.

While the normal use of the reservoir's surface water is governed by the Vermont Use of Public Waters Rules administered by the Department of Environmental Conservation, the City of Barre owns all property around the reservoir. This has created an ambiguous situation for the City, which has authority to control access to its property, when such violations of the recreational fishing policy are encountered. In theory, if an individual were to gain access to the surface water without crossing City-owned property (i.e., rappel from aircraft), the prohibitions under the City's policy would be moot.

This lack of clarity has real consequences. In recent incidents at Dix Reservoir, the City was notified only after a state permit had already been issued for a fishing tournament, despite the City's explicit opposition. As a result, Barre City Police have been placed in the position of preparing to enforce trespass laws against participants in a state-approved event. This is not a safe or effective enforcement posture. It creates confusion for the public, undermines confidence in the law, and increases the likelihood of confrontation.

As Chief of Police for the City of Barre, my responsibility is to maintain public safety and ensure that laws are enforced in a clear and predictable manner. The passage of this bill would negate any ambiguity and allow the City to fully enforce the use of the surface water of the reservoir.

For these reasons, I support the passage of S.224. It addresses a real enforcement gap that Barre City Police have experienced firsthand and provides the clarity needed to protect public safety without unnecessary confrontation. Thank you for the opportunity to share this perspective. I am available to answer questions or provide additional information if helpful.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Braedon S. Vail".

Braedon S. Vail
Chief of Police