

# Vermont Citizens Advisory Committee (VTCAC) on Lake Champlain's Future

May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
5:00 – 7:00 pm

## Approved Meeting Summary Meeting recording available [here](#)

**Committee Members Present:** Denise Smith (Vice-chair), Eric Clifford, Karina Dailey, Wayne Elliot, Bob Fischer, Lori Fisher, Hilary Solomon

**Committee Members Absent:** Mark Naud, Sen. Chris Bray, Sen. Randy Brock, Rep. Kari Dolan, Rep. Carol Ode

**LCBP Staff in Attendance:** Katie Darr, Lauren Jenness

**Public Guests:** None

**Presenters:** Les Carver (Stone Environmental), Dave Braun (Stone Environmental), Joe Ayotte (USGS), Raju Badireddy (UVM), Eamon Twohig (VTDEC)

Meeting summary prepared Katie Darr, Lake Champlain Basin Program

### 1. **Welcome and Introductions** – Denise Smith

### 2. **Public Comments**

No public comments were made.

### 3. **ACTION ITEM:** Review and vote on Draft April 10<sup>th</sup> meeting summary – Denise Smith

Motion By: Wayne Elliot

Second by: Hilary Solomon

Discussion on the motion: None.

Vote: All in favor

Abstentions: Lori Fisher, Bob Fischer

### 4. **Contaminants Monitoring Study Overview** – Dave Braun, Les Carver (Stone Environmental), Joe Ayotte (USGS), Raju Badireddy (UVM)

Les Carver and Dave Braun provided an overview of the proposed Contaminants Monitoring Study which resulted from the CAC's 2021 Contaminants Monitoring Resolution. Les and Dave co-presented along with the members of the project team which also includes Jody Stryker, Joe Ayotte, Raju Badireddy, and Chris Holmes. The presentation is available with the meeting materials ([here](#)).

#### *Discussion*

- Matt thanked the project team for presenting and noted this is a great example of the advisory committees working together. This project stemmed from a CAC resolution and TAC took up the request.
- Lori requested that in future discussions, reports, outreach documents, etc. include a very clear definition of emerging contaminants and reinforce the history and genesis of the project.
- Hilary asked if the study would parse out regional differences and trends in contaminants. Dave noted that more time and more samples would be required to say anything definitive about the sources of the contaminants. If something unexpected is found, that would highlight the need for further investigation.
- Wayne noted some concern about the ability to get representative samples and identify trends with the project's budget. The project is targeting many different sources and contaminants. Was there discussion

about prioritizing a subset for the initial study? Matt clarified the request from LCBP that the project team is responding to. Synoptic sampling won't illuminate trends but it will help identify how to better invest resources moving forward for the development of a long-term contaminants monitoring framework. Les added the team is taking into consideration the sampling that others are doing in the watershed. For example, with DEC's PFAS monitoring, they may be able to remove some of that from this framework analysis.

- Bob asked who is doing the sampling and how variations in weather will be accounted for. Les shared USGS and Stone Environmental Scientists will be responsible for the sampling. They intend to sample during spring events to capture the results of the spring flush. Matt added that composite sampling is useful because it allows for sampling during a range of flow events and results in an average representation of a sampling location. Joe noted that USGS collects all samples according to a national field manual and the Quality Assurance process bears out the ability to get clean samples.
- Lori asked if Nat Shambaugh is on the project advisory committee (PAC). Dave noted the PAC roster has not been finalized, that will be a TAC decision. Joe Ayotte shared that Nat is working on the writeup for the synoptic study on glyphosate.
- Lori asked about the timeframe of this study and if there is a way LCBP can build the groundwork now so follow-up studies can build off this study in a timely manner. Dave shared there is an interagency committee on chemical management they would like some project team members to be a part of. That committee is a coordination between the Agency of Agriculture, Department of Health, and DEC. Les added that between State Agencies, universities, USGS, LCBP TAC, NOAA, and others, there are a lot of things moving in the same direction related to contaminants monitoring. Joe shared that the USGS New England Water Science Center formed the Lake Champlain Science Team last year and has been fantastic so far to work with LCBP and partners around the watershed to identify and respond to science needs.
- Lori recommended the CAC follow up with another resolution with the NY and QC CACs to lay the foundation for continued work without significant lag time. We are vulnerable to contamination and it is important to continue devoting funding to analysis. The CACs have a role to keep pressure on leadership to keep advancing this work. Denise supported following up with another resolution.

## **5. Residuals Management and Emerging Contaminants – Eamon Twohig (VTDEC)**

Eamon provided an overview of the challenges and opportunities associated with sludge and biosolid management in Vermont. His presentation is available with the meeting materials ([here](#)).

### *Discussion*

- Wayne asked if there were concerns about the short and long-term viability of Vermont's biosolids being exported to New York. He also noted there is an opportunity for the private sector to look into short and long-term solutions. Eamon has not heard anything from New York that Casella won't be able to continue to export that material. If they decide not to take it, it would create a lot of problems.
- Bob reiterated that we are in a sludge management crisis, things could go awry quickly.
- Wayne added there's so much we still don't know about PFAS and its migration over time. It's tough to make decisions in the short and long term. He hopes we're not overreacting to it, it's everywhere and we need to figure out reasonable ways to manage it moving forward.
- Bob noted his facility is focused on public health. If water and wastewater plants are hit with the PFAS CERCLA designation, Vermont residents will have to pay for all this when it should be on the manufacturers. People will stop pumping their septic tanks as prices go up. Eamon reinforced that these things are all connected. There are many references to wastewater plants as sources of PFAS, but they are merely receiving and conveying it.

- Eamon added there's a need for consumer education to push back on manufacturers to keep this chemical out of the products we use every day. The typical person is not thinking about PFAS, there's a lot of education that needs to happen.
- Hilary asked if there's a state ban on PFAS, how does it work if you make a purchase in a different state. Eamon compared it to the ban on putting food in the landfill, there wasn't an immediate improvement but it has gotten better over time. If States come together to say they're not buying carpets with PFAS, it puts pressure on producers. There are considerations for creating a certification, like organic. It doesn't mean you can't buy conventional, but you at least have a choice. If we can get certification that guarantees no PFAS in clothing, food packaging, etc., that's a good step. Those certifications are imperfect but on the right track. Bob added that state law is superseded by federal trade laws.
- Eamon noted this is an issue where we can lose the forest through the trees. Are we going to prioritize really low-risk exposure to PFAS over climate change? No one wants to drink PFAS-contaminated water, that is an attainable goal. Where we are as consumers in society, we will need to accept that there will be PFAS in our world. There's concern that it's going to upset the basic pillars of our recycling. We do not want to stop recycling food waste because of PFAS risk. We need to find a way to use recycled material in an appropriate manner that mitigates risk.

#### **6. Membership Discussion – Denise Smith**

This item has been moved to the June agenda. The results from the member survey are available [here](#).

#### **7. Meeting Wrap-Up Discussion – Denise Smith**

The next meeting is scheduled for June 12th and will include a debrief of the legislative session, membership discussion, and July Retreat planning.