



Salem Public Works Department

Rick J. Russell, Jr.
Director of Public Works

December 21, 2011

Windham Planning Board
PO Box 120
Windham, NH 03087-0120

Re: Canobie Lake Watershed Protection Ordinance

Dear Chairperson:

I am writing to express strong support for the proposed Canobie Lake Watershed Protection Ordinance in the Town of Windham. As you are aware, our two communities share common interests in the preservation of the lake, from both a recreational use to a primary source for the Town of Salem's drinking water. Not only is the quality of the water extremely important to us but the quantity equally so. Over the past 15 years, Salem has invested large dollar amounts to accomplish the latter with the installation of a raw water line to use Arlington Lake in off season for a secondary source which has proven to help the lake recover. Since its installation has shown to have averaged an annual two foot higher elevation in the lake levels. As recently as the past two years, we have invested in leak detection which has allowed us to locate and make repairs to our distribution system infrastructure to help eliminate wasted water through these repairs. This year we have begun a five year system wide meter replacement program with automated meters to a cost of several millions of dollars. We are still working on other means to help supplement the lake level. I point this out to you so you can see that we are trying to invest in the lake for both our communities' interests. Activities in the watershed, such as use or storage of toxic materials, and storm water runoff can have serious adverse effects on the water quality. Approximately eighty percent of the land area of the watershed lies in Windham, so what you do there is very important to us.

Recently our Water Department conducted an in house survey of the protective areas surrounding surface water sources in other towns in southern New Hampshire and Massachusetts. Once completed, it made us aware that the Canobie Lake watershed is more highly developed, in terms of residences and businesses, than most surrounding communities, not only in southern New Hampshire but into northern sections of Massachusetts. This leads one to believe that many years ago; other surrounding communities have proactively taken measures around their drinking water supplies to preserve their natural resources, and even back when water was not so much of a precious commodity as it is today. That makes it even more important that new development be done with best practices to minimize impact on the water, and existing landowners be mindful of the effect of their activities on the lake.

We do have a modern water treatment plant at Canobie Lake, and it can remove many contaminants. However, the professional municipal waterworks industry strongly recommends multiple levels of protection. The first level is to minimize potentially contaminating activities in the watershed. The cleaner the source water is the less treatment needs to be done, which improves quality and saves money.

One of the effects of storm water runoff is that it allows phosphorus to migrate into the lake. Phosphorus acts as a fertilizer, and promotes the growth of algae. Several times in the past 20 years we have had to ask the State to apply algaecide to the lake, because algae blooms were causing taste and odor problems in the drinking water. We would prefer not to use algaecide. Storm water controls, such as you have in the proposed ordinance, would help reduce algae growth.

In closing I ask that you see OUR two community's mutual interest in Canobie Lake for the reasons stated above and trust through our combined interests and efforts our two communities can make a difference and help preserve the lake in its pristine setting.

Thank you for your time and if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

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cc: Laura Scott, Development Director, Town of Windham
Bill Schroeder, CLPA