

The Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds' Legislative Committee

ADVOCACY and ACTION PLAN

May 2020

Revised January 2022

Executive Summary

The Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds (FOVLAP) Legislative Committee is one of several committees created by the FOVLAP Board of Directors (BOD) to assist the board and the members in supporting FOVLAP's Mission, *"To preserve and protect Vermont's lakes, ponds and their watersheds for the benefit of this and future generations."* Composed of both FOVLAP BOD and auxiliary board members, the Legislative Committee developed the Advocacy and Action Plan - under the guidance of the BOD - to maintain a proactive presence with the Vermont Legislature to advocate for policies promoting sustainable management and the use of Vermont's lakes, ponds and their watersheds by:

- Advocating to support the FOVLAP Mission;
- Encouraging stewardship to advocate for the protection of Vermont lakes, ponds and their watersheds;
- Monitoring current Vermont legislation; and,
- Networking with other lakes and watershed groups within Vermont and in regional states.

Advocacy and Action Plan

As a nonprofit 501(c)(3), FOVLAP does not engage in paid lobbying. The FOVLAP Bylaws governance allows for BOD advocacy to pursue policies for the conservation and environmental quality of Vermont lakes, ponds and their watersheds. FOVLAP works closely with, but remains autonomous from, the [Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation](#) (VTDEC). In general, FOVLAP's BOD bases its advocacy work upon the currently accepted science, expert consensus and policies that support FOVLAP's Mission. FOVLAP BOD advocacy or legislative testimony may not explicitly represent the diverse points of view held by FOVLAP's various members or of FOVLAP in its entirety. FOVLAP members and the public are encouraged to advocate for the protection and preservation of Vermont's lakes, ponds and their watersheds, and offer personal testimony regarding any legislative bill.

The Legislative Committee's Advocacy and Action Plan supports a proactive presence with the Vermont Legislature to advocate for policies promoting sustainable management and the use of Vermont lakes, ponds and their watersheds by:

ADVOCATING to support FOVLAP's Mission.

- Seeks sustainable long-term funding at the federal, state and local levels for programs supporting:
 - The [Vermont Clean Water Act](#) and other Vermont [laws, regulations and rules pertaining to water quality](#).
 - Conservation, preservation and restoration of Vermont's natural resources.
 - Prevention and management of aquatic invasive species spread.
 - Other water-related issues having negative environmental impacts, e.g., pollution, stormwater runoff, point and nonpoint source discharge, climate change.
- Supports federal, state and local programs promoting waterbody-related research and management, tactical basin planning, preservation of natural ecosystems, and wildlife conservation.



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- Provides resource links to [Vermont legislators](#) to ensure they have easy access to FOVLAP advocacy and educational materials.
- Supports additional staffing at VTDEC to ensure adequate technical guidance and support for Vermont clean water service providers and clean water projects for lakes, ponds and their watersheds.
- Informs the FOVLAP BOD and members of key legislation and legislative information (e.g., committee reports and findings, hearings, statehouse events) pertaining to lake, pond and watershed issues via the FOVLAP [website](#) and [newsletters](#), and other outreach means (e.g., social media, electronic mail, print media), as appropriate. Issues of concern include shoreland protection, phosphorus reduction, cyanobacteria, among others.
- Provides guidance to the FOVLAP BOD for proposed legislative and state agency correspondence.
- Educates the public to raise awareness of FOVLAP and its work.

ENCOURAGING stewardship to advocate for the protection of Vermont lakes, ponds and their watersheds.

- Furthers FOVLAP'S members and the public's understanding and appreciation of how healthy natural resources directly impact Vermont's economy, property values and quality of life.
- Facilitates FOVLAP's members involvement in the legislation process and advocacy activities.
- Devises communication strategies for effective legislative advocacy to support policymaking that promotes water quality and environmental protection for Vermont's natural resources.
- Educates and enhances communication with the legislative body to build meaningful relationships with legislators and weigh in on policy issues related to FOVLAP's Mission.
- Distributes the FOVLAP *Who We Are* brochure to all newly elected or appointed legislators.
- Aids members access to appropriate, reliable resources to help members advocate for waterbody-related issues and concerns.
- Develops periodic member surveys to seek input on legislative issues.
- Invites members or the public to "[contact us](#)" at any time with concerns, questions or comments.

MONITORING current Vermont legislation.

- Stays abreast of current legislative actions pertaining to water quality related issues.
- Seeks opportunities for effective legislative advocacy to promote FOVLAP's Mission.
- Encourages enforcement of mission-relevant local, state and regional legislation.
- Keeps an up-to-date listing of key legislative contacts.

NETWORKING with other lakes and watershed groups within Vermont and in regional states.

- Attends relevant seminars and workshops to gather information and establish personal contacts and relationships.
- Seeks and collaborates with strategic partners sharing similar concerns and interests.
- Educates others to advance Vermont lake, pond and watershed-friendly public policies.

REVIEWING, EVALUATING and REVISING the [Advocacy and Action Plan](#) periodically for its effectiveness.



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