

REC'D DEC 05 2006

To VAST:

Please accept my comments as part of your hearings on the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail project.

I am concerned about the proposed use of herbicides on the trail for vegetation control. I would assume that you are aware of the enormous problems involved with the use of herbicides because of their toxicity--their well documented toxic and carcinogenic effects on the kidneys, nervous system, and liver among many others.

Vermont law calls for "...an overall reduction in the use of pesticides in Vermont...[and]...reducing the amount of acreage where pesticides are used..." (VSA , Title 6, Chapter 87) Indeed, many political bodies in this country and worldwide are banning the use of herbicides on public properties. Your proposal to use herbicides on the trail is a step backwards and does not conform with Vermont policy.

Alternatives to herbicides are available. Indeed, you are already proposing brush cutting to control vegetation on parts of the trail. In addition to increasing brush cutting, another control could be the infrared steam unit which the state of Vermont owns and developed to use on railroad tracks as an alternative to herbicide use.

Vermont has a reputation of stewardship of the environment. Indeed, our own Senator Patrick Leahy has been a leader in the Congress on these issues, developing and passing into law the standards for organic agriculture, which specifically prohibit the use of herbicides on agricultural crops. Increasing the use of herbicides by using them on the Rail Trail would detract from Vermont's leadership position on environmental matters.

I urge you to drop this part of your proposal and to pursue other more safe means for vegetation control.

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cc: Sen. Leahy  
Rep. Sanders  
Rep.-elect Welch  
NVDA  
VTRANS  
Rep. Lucy LeRiche  
Sen. Jane Kitchel