



State of Vermont
Office of the Secretary
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Agency of Natural Resources

March 17, 2008

Mr. Leo Merchant
101 Caledonia Street
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819

Dear Mr. Merchant:

Your correspondence to the Governor's Office has been referred to me for a response. Thank you for taking the time to let the Governor know of your concerns.

The information in your email is not correct. The Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation has not approached the town to put a ban on nudity on the town ballot. The Department has been very clear of this issue with the town. Any effort on a nudity ban should be town business and would have to be generated by town residents. The Department has not given the town any opinion on a nudity ban.

To our knowledge no Selectboard member is a former member of the Department.

The South Cove area of Willoughby State Forest continues to be an area of concern for the Agency.

Numerous complaints are received each year on the nudity at this beach. After several public meetings, the Department decided several years ago not to initiate any changes to management of the beach. Since that time, however, the management issues have increased. The complaints have now expanded to include what can only be described as domestic or interpersonal disputes, property damage and unauthorized use of state property. Due to these issues, the law enforcement presence has been increased at significant expense to the state.

Although nudity is not the reason for many of the new concerns in the area, the issue of nudity in the area is still of concern to many of the public. The number of issues, complaints and management concerns generated at this small beach far exceed what would be "normal" at our other, much larger and more visited beaches.

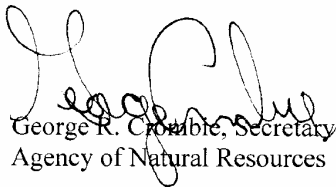




A current concern is the removal of sand from the lake that is being used to fill and expand the beach area by visitors. If this activity is not curtailed, a significant change in the area's management will be implemented.

I would urge you to check with the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation in the future when you hear of rumors that cause you concern.

Sincerely,


George R. Crowble, Secretary
Agency of Natural Resources

cc: James H. Douglas, Governor
Jonathan L. Wood, Commissioner of Department of Forest, Parks & Recreation