

Town of Van Buren
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TO: Land Use Planning Commission

RE: Testimony for Hearing on the Fish River Chain of Lakes Concept Plan

FROM: Nancy Troeger, Town Manager

DATE: May 2, 2018

The only public way providing access to the proposed development near the south shore of Long Lake in T17 R3 is Van Buren's Lake Road, which extends about 4.5 miles from the intersection of Champlain and Castonguay Roads to the private Irving roads. The Irving Fish River Chain of Lakes Concept Plan does not address the cost to Van Buren taxpayers of maintaining or upgrading this road.

The Town of Van Buren collects no tax revenue from the existing camps on Long Lake, nor will we be able to collect tax revenue from any of the proposed developments. The Town also does not receive any payment in lieu of taxes for year-round maintenance of Lake Road. The Concept Plan does discuss the maintenance of the relevant Irving-owned roads, yet it does not address the maintenance of the Van Buren- owned road, nor propose any compensation therefore.

Van Buren is a community that is struggling economically. Our tax base continues to shrink. In the past decade alone, we have lost over 30 homes to floods, fires, demolition, and federal land acquisition. Very few have been constructed. In the past year, six businesses on Main Street have closed their doors, two in just the last month.

Van Buren is a community that welcomes and needs economic growth and development. We recognize that the development proposed in the Concept Plan near the south shore of Long Lake would require materials and contractors to build the camps, and that future camp owners might shop or invest in our community. But we also know that the development proposed in the Concept Plan would significantly increase the traffic on Lake Road and result in the need for increased maintenance and likely a demand for upgrades. Again, the cost of maintenance is, at present, borne solely by Van Buren taxpayers.

Because the Concept Plan does not address these costs or other potential costs for local government services, the Town of Van Buren cannot support the Concept Plan in its present form. However, we would enthusiastically support a Plan that fairly addresses the issues we raise above.