

November 12, 2024

Town of Westfield Development Review Board  
Westfield Town Offices  
Westfield, VT 05874

Dear Members of the Development Review Board:

We are writing to express our strong opposition to the proposed change of use at 922 Crawford Trail and right-of-way through Berry Creek Farm, a thriving organic farm that greatly benefits our community and provides essential resources to our local food bank. This farm is not only a key asset for our town's local food supply but also embodies values of sustainable agriculture, environmental stewardship, and community support.

The proposed change of use and right-of-way raises serious concerns, most notably the potential for increased flooding on the farm's productive land. As you are aware, changes to drainage patterns and soil integrity can have significant environmental impacts. The farm operates in a delicate ecological balance, relying on natural drainage and organic farming practices that avoid chemical runoff. Introducing a change of use and right-of-way risks disturbing this balance, potentially leading to erosion, waterlogging, and loss of fertile soil. These issues would not only jeopardize the farm's ability to maintain its production but could also introduce longer-term environmental degradation.

Beyond environmental impacts, Berry Creek Farm serves as a crucial source of fresh, healthy produce for our community, with a portion of its harvest donated directly to the local food bank. This contribution supports food security for families in need and promotes access to nutritious, locally-grown food. Any disruptions to this farm's operations could reduce the quantity and quality of these donations, thereby impacting some of our most vulnerable residents.

Additionally, the farm's presence enriches our town culturally and economically. It provides a retail outlet for other local businesses that make cheese, yogurt and other agricultural products. Berry Creek also invites community engagement through farm tours and events, and strengthens our local economy by promoting sustainable, locally-sourced produce. This farm is more than just a business; it is a symbol of our town's commitment to sustainable development and the well-being of our residents.

In light of these concerns, I urge the board to reconsider the need for this change of use/right-of-way and explore alternatives that would spare Berry Creek from potential harm. We have a unique opportunity to support a farm that aligns with our town's values and sustains our community. Let's not sacrifice this valuable resource for short-term convenience when other options may be available.

Thank you for considering this request. I am hopeful that you will make a decision that preserves Berry Creek Farm and upholds our community's long-term interests.

Sincerely,  
Beth and Joe Berchick, Westfield, VT 05874