

## Cummings, Valerie

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**From:** Jo Lacaillade <jlacaillade@haverhill-nh.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 12, 2016 3:13 PM  
**To:** Watson, Bill  
**Cc:** Lamontagne, Benoit; Herlihy, Patrick; Winters, Shelley; Barker, Louis; Mayville, Nancy; Jameson, Tom  
**Subject:** Re: Blackmount Rail Trail

Bill,

I am so sorry to hear about your wife, you have my total sympathies.

I would like to come down and go over the records with with so we can better understand. I was wondering if it would be possible to bring a few of the other people with me that are working on this project also. One would be a local businessman who is working with me at the Federal level on his frequent trips to Washington, one would be the Chairman of our Selectboard and lastly, the President of the local ATV club. We need to really understand our options and see where to go from here. In your email, you talk about the fact that even if we pay the money back, the corridors are protected for perpetuity. I cannot believe that anyone would have agreed to such terms if they knew it was part of the acceptance of the funds but hopefully you can help us understand that.

I need to know how many other Towns are involved to see if we can all join together to fight this, I am sure you can shed some light on that also.

Please let me know some open dates that we might come and meet with you and I will see if I can coordinate with the others to come.

Jo

On Fri, Oct 7, 2016 at 10:19 AM, Watson, Bill <[BWatson@dot.state.nh.us](mailto:BWatson@dot.state.nh.us)> wrote:

Good Morning Jo –

Thank you for your patience. My wife passed away about 2 ½ weeks ago, and we are still going through the process of healing, figuring out the new normal for myself and the kids, and just started back at work yesterday.

The Department is sympathetic to the impacts that Haverhill (and other communities such as Claremont) are feeling. FHWA has interpreted the federal rules in a way that may be different from when the rail corridors were purchased in the 1990s. It is also possible that FHWA did not see any issues at the time of the original application. However, FHWA has not allowed any leeway in the current interpretation, as was evident with the recent Claremont waiver request that was deemed incomplete and not approved. And in fact, potential options that were identified by FHWA for a similar situation in Claremont to remedy the circumstances you are now in. some of these options FHWA is now determining to be potentially unallowable.

The NH Department of Transportation does not have funding available to assist in the purchase back of these corridors.

And as eluded to above, FHWA has recently indicated to us that purchasing these corridors back (or repaying FHWA for federal funds used) may not allow for the lifting of restricted use.

If they were to allow for payback I do not expect that there is any consideration for depreciation.

And they have also indicated that these Corridors must be protected in perpetuity.

These issues are handled by FHWA on a case by case basis.

If you would like to meet in person to see some of the information we have available, I would recommend that you come down to Concord. This is something that we have spent a significant amount of time and effort on with the City of Claremont, and the information is all directly transferable to your circumstances in Haverhill.

Regards,

Bill

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William Watson Jr., PE Administrator

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NH Department of Transportation

Bureau of Planning and Community Assistance

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**From:** Jo Lacaillade [mailto:[jlacaillade@haverhill-nh.com](mailto:jlacaillade@haverhill-nh.com)]

**Sent:** Friday, September 30, 2016 8:17 AM

**To:** Watson, Bill; Lamontagne, Benoit; Herlihy, Patrick; Winters, Shelley; Barker, Louis; Mayville, Nancy; Jameson, Tom

**Subject:** Blackmount Rail Trail

Good Morning Bill,

As the impact of the closing of our rail trail is felt more every day I am reaching out again to see if the State is discussing any options that will help the Towns where these now closed trails are. The ATV's pay registration fees which, I assume, are used to develop and maintain new and existing trails. Are these funds available to purchase back from the Federal Highway those trails that we developed with the incentive funds?

The cost of \$170,000 was the original grant, it would seem that after 22 years the amount that would be owed back would have depreciated quite a bit. Please advise if the State is doing anything to assist the Towns to get these trails back open.

How many Towns are affected? Is there some way to band together stronger to make a change?

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