

Calais, Vermont

29 April 1971

Governor Deane C. Davis
State House
Montpelier, Vermont

Dear Governor Davis:

I very seldom write letters to government officials. The feeling is much like putting a note in a bottle and casting it into the sea, knowing that it is almost certain to end up in the seaweed of some functionary's desk or file cabinet--that there is only the most infinitesimal chance it will ever be read by you personally, but it is the only appropriate means at hand for my thoughts about Green Up Day, an event identified solely and personally with the Governor, so far as I can determine.

Now, I am a lifelong Vermont resident of some thirty years; born, raised, and educated entirely within the state, like my father before me. I am as quick as anyone else to assume non-residents and tourists responsible for an assortment of current Vermont problems. But long and careful observation, walking the roads, hills and meadows around the Calais area has convinced me there is little or no difference in the trash and litter density between roads commonly travelled by tourists and campers and others seldom travelled by anyone but local residents. I am about convinced that the rubbish left on the roadsides and in the woods along snow vehicle trails is a predominantly Vermont problem, created by thoughtless Vermont motorists and snow vehicle operators, without fear of apprehension, and fed with a limitless supply of bottles, cans and other plasticized non-decomposing containers by manufacturers and retailers whose only thought is for maximum profits and convenience to themselves.

Last year we were pleased to participate in Green Up Day activities in our community. We made a family occasion of it,

and extended our efforts to some of the secondary roads in town not regularly included in the organized program. We encouraged others to participate and had numerous discussions about the roadside and snow vehicle litter problem both before and after Green Up Day. We were encouraged that a bill was apparently going to be considered by the legislature to eliminate, limit, or control the use of the major types of offending containers in Vermont.

Well, that bill has come and gone now, to all appearances the victim of the predictable and irresistible opposition of retailers, beverage distributors, and bottling companies. The legislature and the Chief Executive were not successful in meeting the obvious need for government action. I watched as closely as TV and newspapers allowed and saw very little indication from your office (until after adjournment) that you considered that bill important enough to press for personally.

And now we are asked to go out and pick up the rubbish again...

I think I have about decided that when government has acted to control the supply of trash at the source, then I and my family will be pleased to make an annual effort to clean up the smaller remaining mess, which there will inevitably be. But until your office and the legislature show your sincerity by taking government action, then the Executive and Legislative branches can just clean up the mess themselves. I think our family does its part by not throwing trash on the roads and in the woods and by reporting those we see who do, even though prosecution does not always result.

I do, however, wish you a successful Green Up Day and sincere hopes for a more effective effort next year to obtain the necessary legislation and enforcement to minimize this problem.

Very truly yours,


Carl L. Buffum

Maple Corner

Calais, Vermont

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