



Lantern Hill Valley Association, Inc

% Betsy Graham, Secretary

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Jan 18, 2021

James Sullivan
Director of Finance
Town of Stonington
152 Elm Street
Stonington, CT 06378

Re: Whitford Brook-Lantern Hill Road bridge on the shared town line of Ledyard-Stonington #137001

Dear Mr. Sullivan,

The Lantern Hill Valley Association is a community association representing residents of the Long Pond/Lantern Hill area. We recognize that we are not all within your district but respectfully request that you consider our petition. While many residents in this area are from Ledyard and North Stonington, Stonington residents are also part of our community. The Whitford Brook bridge at the Stonington-Ledyard town lines is a shared resource and plays a vital role in SE CT's larger community. Stonington has denied its shared community responsibility by not establishing the bridge as a priority.

We are writing to urge the officials and elected representatives of the Town of Stonington to work with the Town of Ledyard toward the goal of finding a long-term solution to the Whitford Brook-Lantern Hill Rd bridge #137-001. We are aware of the bridge's current state and the proposed repair. This repair will only be a temporary fix to a much bigger problem.

The bridge is now 70 years old, and at best, with short-term repairs, has a lifespan of five to ten years. We know you are aware of this bridge's societal importance to the over 150 homes in the Lantern Hill Valley area for EMS support, medical needs, and shopping in the SE coastal towns. Residents within this corridor live in Ledyard, North Stonington, and Stonington. Lantern Hill Rd serves as a crucial N-S corridor for commuters, recreation and tourists between the Rt 2 corridor and towns of Groton, Mystic, and Stonington.

The Lantern Hill Valley Association also has an ecological concern. As the Long Pond and Bush Pond dams owners, we are responsible for these dams. We are working with Save The Sound toward improving the future of the river herring known as alewife. Save The Sound has started the process and received funding for the first stage. This spring, they will begin the design and plan phase of a nature-like fishway.

The alewife is a critical food source for ocean life, including the fish we catch to eat, birds, and whales. The ocean cycle is 4 to 5 years, and then they migrate to freshwater lakes for spawning. The young grow in the lakes for part of a year and then migrate back to the ocean through Long Island Sound waters. Unlike salmon, alewife adults may migrate back to the salt waters returning a second time to the lakes for spawning. They are also beneficial in freshwater lakes as a food source for sport fish.

As the fishway project will also take several years, we feel it is urgent to get the Whitford Brook bridge replaced with a long term solution as soon as possible. The action of temporary bridge repairs will ultimately result in this issue addressed again within 5 to 10 years. Such a delay could be disruptive and detrimental to the success of the alewife return.

Senator Osten is including funding for this bridge as part of an infrastructure package she is presenting to CT State to apply for funds available via the Federal CARES Act. We feel it is crucial for you to give your full support to Senator Osten's request so that the bridge and community that utilize it daily will have a long-term solution in place soon. We hope the Lantern Hill Valley area residents can count on your support.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss this further. Thank you for your consideration.

Betsy Graham

Secretary, Lantern Hill Valley Association

The Lantern Hill Valley Association Officers and Board members:

Officers: David Keehn, President; Steve Fagin, Vice President; Bob Graham, Treasurer; Betsy Graham, Secretary
Board Members: Lisa Brownell, John Rodolico, Warren Speh, Nancy Strawderman, Cindy Vigue, Peg Welles