

Town of Greensboro

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Greensboro, Vermont 05841
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October 29, 2024

Executive Office of **Governor Phil Scott**
109 State Street, Pavilion
Montpelier, VT 05609

Dear Governor Scott,

Greensboro is a small community in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. Caspian Lake increases the town's population from 820 during the winter to over 2500 during the summer months. Like all communities in this rural area of Vermont, we know our neighbors. We know who serves on our local boards and committees. We know those who need help after an accident or illness. We know who to call to tend our flowerbeds, bring in a warm meal, stack wood and watch over our neighbor's property and their pets while out of town.

The NEK of Vermont has an aging population. Many want to remain in their homes as they age. Access to health care is essential for this population to remain strong and self-sufficient. Because the NEK does not have public transportation, many rely on family, friends or neighbors to transport them to health facilities. Being close to family during recovery decreases the healing time and thus time in a hospital. Having Rehabilitation services nearby also decreases the healing time.

Closing North Country Hospital would deny these families that close to home care and may increase their recovery time and add extra stress to friends and family they rely on.

Access to close Emergency services is crucial for this aging population. Waiting for Emergency services to arrive, evaluate and transport to the nearest Hospital can take up to 30 or 40 minutes. If there is not a hospital close by, the next closest is used. This lack of emergency services within a reasonable time increases the overall time to receive lifesaving procedures. In the case of stroke, heart attack, diabetic coma, or other conditions, adding extra time decreases the window of opportunity to receive lifesaving treatment. More responsibility is put onto EMTs and paramedics.

Closing North Country Hospital will affect those seniors and their families who rely on health care close to home.

Vermont, as a result of marketing to bring more tourists to enjoy our beautiful state, has seen an increase in the numbers and thus the revenues. Both are beneficial to our economy. Many come to take part in hiking, skiing, bicycling, kayaking, fishing. They are coming to the Northeast Kingdom in larger numbers. We see this happening in Greensboro. It only follows that other communities are seeing the same increase in numbers. While this increase benefits our tax revenue, it also increases our responsibility, as a state and communities, to have appropriate emergency care for those of all ages. Many who take part in the recreation of our area are younger and, for the most part, in good health. Accidents do happen which may require hospital treatment. Illnesses requiring hospitalization may be unexpected but service close by is essential until family can arrange alternate care.

We may be a rural state but it is no excuse to shun our responsibility of adequate quality emergency and inpatient health care no matter which part of the state the tourist chooses to travel.

North Country Hospital is an essential component to our responsibility as a state to care for the people we invite in to share and enjoy our beautiful surroundings, food and entertainment. Losing this hospital will be sending a message the state of Vermont does not value the residents of the NEK and our many out of state guests.

The state of Vermont wants to encourage young families to come into our state. Young families are looking for affordable housing, schools, and health care for the entire family. They want high speed internet. The NEK struggles with all of these.

The state has forced school closures. Greensboro is struggling with the possible loss of our elementary school. Other small communities have succumbed to the state's wishes. Is closing hospitals the next step?
How can we encourage young families to move to our small towns if the basic needs are not met.

Senator Aiken named our area of the State "The Northeast Kingdom" because of its extreme beauty. This area is the last frontier. The small rural communities of the Northeast Kingdom have a lot to offer through the people who have grown up here, raised their families here and support small businesses here. The residents of these small communities are here to teach the next generation.

The aging population of Vermont, the tourists coming from across the country and the young families with a desire to live in a small rural community need to trust the State of Vermont will not remove valuable services.

Closing the hospital in Newport VT will have a detrimental effect on the needs of those small communities surrounding North Country Hospital.

The Greensboro Selectboard unanimously approves this letter.

Sincerely,
Greensboro Selectboard



Eric Hanson, Chair
MacNeil, Vice chair
David Kelley
Ellen Celnik
Bobbie Nisbet