

9c

Sheldon Houghton  
Vice President  
Vermont Rail System  
One Railway Lane  
Burlington, VT 05401

February 14, 2017



Dear Mr. Houghton:

This letter is in response to your February 6 letter and the illegal closure of the rail crossing at the north end of Kendall Station Rd. on February 10 (pursuant to 5 V.S.A. § 3639 crossing are to be closed by mutual consent).

The closure of the north access to Kendall Station by the placement of concrete barriers creates an unnecessary hazard during a flood. Both the north crossing and the southern part of Kendall Station Rd are in the 100 year flood zone (FEMA map # 50027C0263E). However, the southern end of Kendall Station is about 3 feet lower than the northern crossing. During a flood, when the southern end of Kendall Station Rd. is under 3 feet of water and becomes impassable, the northern crossing would have still been passible and provided an escape route. Additionally, the south end of Kendall Station Rd. is also in the river corridor of the Ompompanoosuc River and is at risk when that river floods. ([http://floodready.vermont.gov/assessment/vt\\_floodready\\_atlas](http://floodready.vermont.gov/assessment/vt_floodready_atlas)). The north access to Kendall Station Rd. is essential to safety during flood events.

The closure also block access to the school bus stop for students living at the north end of Kendall Station. The bus stop is at that crossing.

There are alternatives to the concrete barriers to make the north crossing safer. They include signage, removal of the routing information from GPS data bases, plowing the crossing, etc. The concrete barriers should be removed immediately.

Additional I would like to make the following requests:

- 1) This summer a culvert was replaced at the north crossing (I believe this was done by VRS). The old culvert was discarded along the side of Route 5. Would you please dispose of the old culvert appropriately?
- 2) Vermont Rail System has stored several hundreds of new railroad ties just north of the north crossing. Storing a large concentration of ties here causes toxic material to leach into the soil at higher than normal concentrations and undoubtedly contaminates neighboring properties. Additionally, if the area is subject to a flood those ties will be carried downstream and become a safety and environmental hazard. The Rail Road may be exempt from using these toxic ties

but the exemption does not extend to their storage. Would you please have those ties removed?

- 3) Vermont Rail System has stored or discarded old rail road ties along this section of Kendall Station (and all along the Connecticut River). For the reasons stated above they create an environmental and safety hazard. Would you please have those ties removed and disposed of properly?

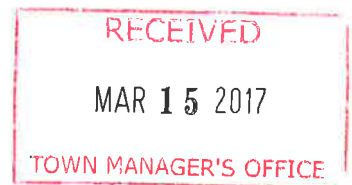
If you have any questions please contact me.

Sincerely,



Tim Chow  
 164 Kendall Station Rd.  
 Norwich, VT 05055  
 802 649-2101

- CC: Steve Leinoff, Fire Chief  
 Doug Robinson, Police Chief  
 Dave Ormiston, Town Manager  
 Mark Fitzgerald, VT Agency of Transportation  
 Tim Briglin, VT State Representative  
 Jim Masland, VT State Representative  
 John Campbell, VT State Senator  
 Andrew French, manager of USFWS Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge



9c

Selden Houghton  
Vice President  
Vermont Rail System  
One Railway Lane  
Burlington, VT 05401

March 14, 2017

Dear Mr. Houghton:

The Vermont Railroad has recently increase the speed of their trains though the Kendall Station Rd. neighborhood. The speed has increased from about 10 mph to an estimated 25 mph or more. Because of this speed increase I measured the sight distance ( $d_T$ ) at the southern Kendall Station crossing (DOT #053547P) which is currently the only crossing available (VRS unilaterally closed the northern crossing, DOT #053548W last month ) to Kendall Station and River Edge Lane.

I used the method specified in *Railroad-Highway Grade Crossing Handbook - Revised Second Edition 2007* (Federal Highway Administration: <https://www.fra.dot.gov/Elib/Document/1464>) – page 68, figure 9. When measured for vehicles traveling east on Kendall Station Rd the sight distance ( $d_T$ ) was 225' to the north and 275' to the south. According to table 32 (page 69, case B) a sight distance of 240' or more is required for a train moving 10 mph for an unprotected crossing. According to the same table to operate a train safely at 25 mph would require a sight distance of at least 600' (interpolated).

Operating trains though this crossing at more than 10 mph does not meet Federal Guidelines for this crossing and is clearly dangerous. Please IMMEDIATELY reduce the speed of the trains to less than 10 mph (or take other precautions as specified in the *Handbook*).

If you have any questions please contact me.

Sincerely,

Tim Chow  
164 Kendall Station Rd.  
Norwich, VT 05055  
tim\_chow@hotmail.com

CC: Dave Ormiston, Town Manager  
Mark Fitzgerald, VT Agency of Transportation  
Tim Briglin, VT State Representative  
Jim Masland, VT State Representative  
John Campbell, VT State Senator  
Norwich Select board  
John Zicconi, VT Transportation Board  
John Roback