

To: Mr. Steve Christensen, Drain Commissioner c/o levans@leelanau.gov

Fr: Wyman Bolton,

Re: Comments on Proposed S. Bar Lake Drain

Dt: 4/28/22

Dear Mr. Christensen,

I have a home on S. Lake Michigan Drive in the Village of Empire as well as property in the Drain District outside of the Village. My request is that the Drain Commission **evaluate one additional option** of replacing the current antiquated culvert with an engineered sloped culvert system. A sloped culvert would be more effective in keeping the culvert free of sand, the extraction of which appear to be where the majority of the current cost is incurred, and given that Lake Michigan is on its 30 year downward cycle the cost of keeping the outlet open will be significantly reduced.

The 4 options that were presented seem extravagant and their cost estimates were incomplete as follows:

- Options #3 and #4 are the most expensive and did not address the significant time and cost of permitting. My recent experience with installing a simple beachfront revetment proves this out.

- Option #1 and #2 did not address;

 - *the cost of circumventing the mill foundation

 - *the cost of maintaining the current public beach revetment that will most surely be eroded with the new water flow

 - *the cost to decommission the current culvert

My observation is that the nature of the problem has been **mischaracterized** in an effort to spread the cost of the solution from the citizens in the Village to the citizens of the broader Drain District. When you can spread the cost amongst several to benefit the few, the risk is that the solution becomes more extravagant and divisive. Our goal should be to minimize both.

This is not a Drain District problem but rather primarily a Village issue. The nature of the **problem** is that the culvert on Lake Michigan Drive plugs from time to time causing the water level to rise in S. Bar and thus impacting lakeside residents and those village residents off S. Bar with basements or low lot levels.

The **cause** of the problem is the natural 30 year ebb and flow of Lake Michigan water levels in combination with natural occurring wave action. The cause is not the larger watershed. The culvert does not plug because the watershed exists, but rather because of changing Lake Michigan water levels and storm action.

Ceding control of the problem to the Drain District did not reduce the tax burden that supports the Village budget [*which is where Village residents have the most input and control*] but rather increased the tax burden to Village residents from another entity [*namely the Drain District*] where Village residents have no control. In other words, the cost to the Village to maintain the current culvert will not be returned to the citizens, but rather an additional tax will be incurred via the Drain District to pay

off the debt to construct one of the 4 options which, based upon preliminary estimates, could easily exceed 10X the current annual maintenance cost to keep the culvert flowing.

Ironically, given that the law requires the cost be spread to those who most benefit from the solution, the residents in the Village [*which includes S. Lake Michigan Dr.*], and the 10 or so lots in the Township on the North end of S. Bar Lake, will end up paying the bulk of the new tax and therefore should be very interested, as I am, in minimizing the cost by simply replacing the existing antiquated drain with a more engineered sloped culvert system.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Wyman Bolton