

**From:** Searles, Brian  
**Sent:** Monday, August 15, 2011 5:06 PM  
**To:** MacLean, Alex; Lofy, Bill  
**CC:** Minter, Sue  
**Subject:** RE: Request from Brookfield

Alex/Bill - The Floating Bridge is beyond effective repair according to our bridge division and they disagree with the assessment made by the Norwich students since it doesn't include some major work that needs to be done to the abutments and the anchoring system. The bridge has been closed to motor vehicle traffic for some time and, of course, is closed all winter. It is not missed as a transportation link and is not particularly important in that regard. However, it is an iconic tourist attraction; exactly how much of an attraction is being looked at by Lawrence Miller at my request. Despite our warnings, pedestrians are using the bridge which is slimy and slippery and a liability to the state in its present condition. It is also not the original bridge, having been substantially replaced twice, most recently in 1978.

Here are the options on this bridge:

1. Remove the bridge ASAP. Begin a replacement project which would replicate the existing bridge at a cost not to exceed \$2 million. This could be under construction by the summer of 2013.
2. Remove bridge and put a picture of it at either end. But seriously folks, we actually could do a pedestrian facility at a lower cost but I think cars crossing is the main draw.
3. Since Route 65 is the only state dirt road and since the floating bridge is of more local significance than statewide significance (opinion), we could turn over the road and the bridge to the town and in return we could give them a Town Highway Bridge grant in the amount of \$200,000 for the implementation of the Norwich solution as a local project.

We are working with a member of the Select Board, John Benson, who is an engineer and agrees with our assessment of the bridge as not repairable. However, a number of people have bought into the repair scenario including Sen. Mark McDonald. We are working toward a way forward but trying to understand the tourism picture a little better.

I hope the Governor has a more important competing event on Sunday. It would be nice to be able to say that this bridge will be fixed or replaced, and I'd bet that it will be, but we're not ready for him to say that just yet.

Having said that, it would be really good to know just how important this is to him. That would make our decision much easier.

Brian

Brian R. Searles

Secretary of Transportation  
Vermont Agency of Transportation  
One National Life Drive  
Montpelier, VT 0563305001  
Phone: (802)-828-2657

-----Original Message-----

From: MacLean, Alex  
Sent: Monday, August 15, 2011 7:49 AM  
To: Searles, Brian; Lofy, Bill  
Subject: FW: Request from Brookfield

Hi Brian,

Can you fill me in on what is going on with this floating bridge? I've been hearing about it a lot lately! Is this something he can do? Will we be rebuilding the bridge?

Thanks

A

Alexandra MacLean  
Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs  
1-802-279-3560

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From: Curtis Koren [cckoren@gmail.com]  
Sent: Sunday, August 14, 2011 4:27 PM  
To: MacLean, Alex  
Subject: Request from Brookfield

Dear Alex Maclean,

Our good friend and neighbor here in Brookfield, Don Hooper, suggested we contact you about the possibility of Governor Shumlin attending a rally to save the historic floating bridge here in town. The event is planned for August 21, noon - 1 pm. It coincides with our annual Market Day during which the many old and new farms in Brookfield who make up the Floating Bridge Farm Cooperative will be exhibiting their wares, etc in our Old Town Hall a few houses down from the bridge. Other events include the library sale, and a bbq dinner at our local restaurant, Ariel's. There is widespread interest in reopening the bridge, which is part of a state road and one of only two floating bridges in the US. The rally has been organized by our Town Clerk, Jane Woodruff, who is also the Chair of the Brookfield Republicans. But reopening the bridge has wide bipartisan support, and we would all be honored and delighted if our Governor would attend. There will be two speakers: Kit Gage, from a longstanding Brookfield farming family and the former principal of the Brookfield Elementary School, who will talk about the history of the

bridge and its importance to Brookfield life and community rhythms; and Greg Wight, a Brookfield resident who teaches environmental engineering at Norwich U. Greg's engineering students at Norwich spent a semester last year studying the simple wooden bridge, and how it might be repaired economically. They came up with a detailed plan, and budget of @\$200,000 - a stark contrast to the State's estimate of \$2 million. Our rep in the legislature, Patsy French, had had the good news that the State was going to repair the bridge, but then that plan was put on hold this spring. We know money in the State is tight, but we hope Governor Shumlin might take an interest in helping our town look at ways that we can bring this historic bridge back into service in an economical way that spotlights Vermont ingenuity, creativity and community spirit. Thank you for passing this on to the Governor, and please let me know if you have any questions, etc.

All the Best,  
Curtis and Ed Koren  
276-3424