

[By Alden Pellet](#)

The state of Vermont is celebrating national fishing and boating week- by offering free fishing on Saturday. But, with recent flooding on Lake Champlain-- fishing may NOT be on everyone's minds. Officials are trying to change that.

Lake Champlain floodwaters have been receding over the past couple weeks and the amount of debris in the lake has reduced. Shoreline roads have been uncovered and repaired, making boating safer than it was and easier to reach - local businesses are eager to get the word out.

James Ehlers of Ehlers RV told us Saturday, "Yeah, it's enormous. I mean anybody that has any sort of business related to serving tourism or hospitality or fishing or boating, sailing, has been really impacted and there's no FEMA insurance for that. "

One of those businesses is the Bay Store in St. Albans. The road to the store was recently opened.

Bay Store owner, Robyn Kesser comments, "Going all the way around has had a huge impact on our business. We lost 7800 customers and a lot of dollars and you know this is the time of year that you make your money for the whole year. So, it's been pretty devastating."

But the devastation turned to smiles when the road reopened-- bring back crucial business.

"It was almost immediately, cause all of a sudden, two boats on either side of the gas pump, the fishing section, coffee, ice cream, the whole works." Kesser added.

Getting the word out that lakeshore businesses are ready to help with summer fun is something members of the Vermont delegation are doing as well. Congressman Peter Welch joined

fishermen Saturday to get out the message that the lake is ready for fishing..and even with a little weekend rain, the fish don't mind.

"Well you know the lake is higher than it normally is, and it's causing some flooding and some hardship for some of our businesses. But getting on the lake, it's water, so... it's a little bit higher water, be careful. But there's no reason not to get out and enjoy this incredible Lake Champlain. So, I encourage Vermonters to do it and I'm really happy that we're calling this a work day for me., It can't get any better than that." Said Congressman Welch.

...and the same is true for fishermen and those with lake-based businesses, when a little more rain this weekend didn't seem to dampen spirits...

"Anytime you can go fishing, is a good time to go fishing. I'm not picky, I like being out and that's really in the end, that's what it's all about." Ehlers laughed.

A simple message that is being cast around the lake.