

Dear Representative Schmid, Straus, Senator Montigny,
and Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

I'm writing to you today as a concerned resident in the Town of Acushnet, MA, to express my concerns and disapproval over the new regulations the MA DEP plans on adopting in, 2023, regarding 310 CMR 15.000 (Septic Systems) Title 5 Law in MA. While the protection of our environment, especially the watershed, is important, I can't accept the new regulations being proposed for several reasons,

The MA DEP is a regulatory organization and should not be creating regulations that drastically impact towns and cities to the point of possible financial disaster, the legislative body you represent has not been properly informed, educated, nor have they had a chance to voice their concerns or opinions about this process which is being rushed along. The new regulations being proposed should be postponed until there has been public outreach by the MA DEP and clarity regarding the actual cost per resident in each town or city affected by these drastic measures. Under Massachusetts general law, these proposed new regulations would fall under an 'Unfunded Mandate' and I am asking for an exemption, in my opinion, this is another classic example of 'government overreach'.

While the town of Acushnet is currently listed as within safe nitrogen levels, it is open to interpretation on the NSA map the DEP has provided and could eventually impact roughly 4,000 homes in our town. Until the Combined Sewer Overflow issue in New Bedford and Fairhaven is resolved and thorough research is done on the effect of clear-cutting land to place solar installations on the cleared sites, I don't believe that MA DEP can get an accurate nitrogen level from the town of Acushnet. As you may know, within moments of clearing land, the nitrogen content in the soil increases drastically.

I understand that Cape Cod is in dire need of this program, but it's unfair to put the South Coast under the same umbrella, we have many residents in our town on fixed incomes and there's absolutely no way they could afford this regardless of whether there is a state funded loan program. No one should be subject to adding a 10, 20 or 30 year note onto their existing mortgage or basic cost of living needs, especially with record high inflation/energy costs due to irresponsible spending at the Federal level and prohibitive energy policies. Unless the State or Federal government can fully fund this project, I can't imagine a scenario that doesn't permanently damage the financial stability of residents in the town of Acushnet, causing many to be potentially forced from their homes.

Sincerely,