

THE COALITION FOR BUZZARDS BAY

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May 27, 2011

Commissioner Kenneth Kimmell
MA Department of Environmental Protection
One Winter Street
Boston, MA 02108

Re: Potential Groundwater Discharge Violations

Dear Commissioner Kimmell,

The Buzzards Bay Coalition is writing to request that your Department investigate potential violations of state Groundwater Discharge Regulations in the town of Wareham. It has come to our attention that unpermitted wastewater discharges in excess of 10,000 gallons per day are likely discharging a substantial amount of nitrogen into the Wareham and Weweantic Rivers.

The Bay Coalition is a nonprofit membership organization dedicated to the restoration, protection and sustainable use and enjoyment of Buzzards Bay and its watershed. We represent more than 8,000 individuals, families, organizations, and businesses in Southeastern Massachusetts.

The potential violations are connected to the mobile home parks located in the town of Wareham within the watersheds to the Wareham and Weweantic River estuaries. It is not clear to us how wastewater at these mobile home parks is managed and whether or not it is treated. It is our understanding that there are no state groundwater discharge permits issued by DEP for these developments, nor is there evidence that the developments are compliant with Title 5 regulations at the local level.

Due to the density of units in these developments, potentially large volumes of untreated wastewater are being generated. To the best of our knowledge the names of each mobile home park, and estimated number of housing units, are provided.

Garden Homes North:	135 units
Garden Homes Pines:	9 units
Great Hill Estates:	222 units
Green Tree Estates:	44 units
Holly Heights:	44 units
Royal Crest:	154 units
Subtotal =	~608 units

Bringing these discharges into compliance with state regulations will have major benefits to the water quality in the Wareham and Weweantic Rivers. Currently, both coastal systems are impaired by nitrogen and listed on the federal Clean Water Act's 303(d) list requiring a Total Maximum Daily Load, the federal limit established to ensure that healthy water quality is restored for the community. It is clear from draft Massachusetts Estuaries Reports on the Wareham River system that the town has a lot of work ahead of it to reduce nitrogen from existing wastewater sources and addressing these discharges may be an important step in that process.

In bringing these potential unpermitted discharges to your attention we hope to have identified what we think could be a substantial source of nitrogen to the Wareham and Weweantic Rivers. Furthermore, through permitting, if these discharges are brought into line with the nitrogen limits established at the Wareham Wastewater Treatment Facility, 4mg/L, it will likely result in a substantial decrease in nitrogen pollution currently impairing these rivers.

The Coalition stands ready to assist the Department in these efforts. Please contact me with any questions or concerns. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Korrin Petersen", with a large blue oval scribble over the top portion of the signature.

Korrin N. Petersen, Esq.
Senior Attorney

Cc: Senator Marc R. Pacheco
Representative Susan Williams Gifford

Town of Wareham
Board of Selectmen
Board of Health
Clean Water Committee
Conservation Commission
Municipal Maintenance