



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
Central Regional Office, 627 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01608

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**PUBLIC MEETING –April 11, 2007**  
**Massachusetts Estuaries Project**  
**West Falmouth Harbor, Oyster Pond, and Little Pond; Town of Falmouth**  
**Draft Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) For Total Nitrogen**

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) announces the availability, for public comment, of the Draft Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) for Total Nitrogen in West Falmouth Harbor, Oyster Pond and Little Pond in Falmouth. These draft TMDL Reports, numbers MA 96-TMDL-11, MA 96-TMDL-7, and MA 96-TMDL-8, respectively, are required by the EPA Federal Clean Water Act section 303d. These TMDLs, and the Technical Reports on which they are based, have been prepared as part of the Massachusetts Estuaries Project, a collaborative effort of the MassDEP, the University of Massachusetts School for Marine Science and Technology, the Cape Cod Commission, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, as well as municipalities and watershed associations in southeastern Massachusetts, to identify and address nitrogen pollution in 89 estuaries in southeastern Massachusetts.

A TMDL establishes the maximum amount of a pollutant that a water body can accept and still meet water quality standards. The TMDL serves as the regulatory and technical basis for developing integrated water resource management plans designed to restore the water quality of impaired water bodies. These water bodies are listed on the proposed 2006 Massachusetts Integrated List of Waters (Category 5) as impaired for pathogens, but research by the MEP indicate that they are also impaired by nutrients.

MassDEP has prepared these Draft TMDL reports for controlling excess nutrients (nitrogen), the primary cause of eutrophication that can lead to: loss of eelgrass beds (which are critical habitats for macro-invertebrates and fish), undesirable increases in macro algae (which are much less beneficial than eelgrass), periodic extreme decreases in dissolved oxygen concentrations that threaten aquatic life, reductions in the diversity of benthic animal communities, and periodic algae blooms. The primary "locally controllable" source of nitrogen in these embayments is sanitary wastewater from septic systems. Stormwater runoff, leaching lawn fertilizers, discharges from agricultural land uses, and atmospheric deposition, also contribute varying quantities of nitrogen to these embayments. The goal is to achieve state water quality standards for Class SA and SB waters as defined in Massachusetts Surface Water Quality Standards, 314 CMR 4.00. The water quality standards of particular interest are for dissolved oxygen, nutrients, aesthetics, excess plant biomass, and nuisance aquatic vegetation. Standards for Class SA and SB waters provide numerical and narrative criteria to meet designated uses, including the support of habitat for fish and other aquatic wildlife.

A copy of these Draft TMDLs and a further explanation of the TMDL Program are available on MassDEP's website at: <http://www.mass.gov/dep/water/resources/esttmdls.htm>. The Massachusetts Estuaries Project Final Technical Reports for West Falmouth Harbor, Oyster Pond, and Little Pond, on which the TMDLs were based, are available at <http://www.oceanscience.net/estuaries/reports.htm>.

**The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) will hold a public meeting on Wednesday, April 11, 2007 from 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm in the Gus Cauty Community Center to discuss and respond to any public comments on the reports.**

MassDEP will consider all comments and these Draft TMDL Reports will be revised as appropriate prior to submittal to EPA Region 1 for approval. All public comments, which should refer to report numbers MA 96-TMDL-11, and/or, MA 96-TMDL-7, and/or MA 96-TMDL-8, must be received in writing or in electronic format by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 11, 2007 and addressed to:

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection  
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Attn: Michael Ackerman  
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