



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Division of Watershed Management, 627 Main Street, Worcester, MA
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PUBLIC MEETING - July 28, 2005
Massachusetts Estuaries Project
Coastal Embayments, Towns of Mashpee and Falmouth
Draft Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) For Total Nitrogen
Cape Cod Watershed

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MA DEP) announces the availability, for public comment, of the Draft Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) for Total Nitrogen in five coastal waterbody segments in Mashpee and Falmouth: Quashnet River, Hamblin Pond, Little River, Jehu Pond, and Great River, Report number MA 96-TMDL-5. This Draft TMDL Report is required by the EPA Federal Clean Water Act section 303d. This TMDL and the Technical Report on which it is based have been prepared as part of the Massachusetts Estuaries Project, a collaborative effort of the MA DEP, the University of Massachusetts School of Marine Science and Technology, the Cape Cod Commission, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, to identify and address nitrogen pollution in 89 estuaries in southeastern Massachusetts.

A TMDL is essentially a "pollution budget" and an outline of a cleanup plan designed to restore the health of an impaired waterbody. A TMDL establishes a maximum amount of pollution that a water body can accept and still meet water quality standards. The Chatham embayments are listed on the 2002 Massachusetts Integrated List of Waters (Category 5) as impaired primarily for Nutrients and for Organic Enrichment/Low Dissolved Oxygen.

MA DEP has prepared a Draft TMDL for controlling excess nutrients (nitrogen), the primary cause of eutrophication that chokes waterbodies with harmful algae, depletes oxygen for fish and shellfish populations, and destroys critical eelgrass beds needed for sustaining marine life. The primary source of the contaminant nitrogen in these Mashpee and Falmouth 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 Chatham's coastal rivers, ponds, and harbors. The goal for these five embayments 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 vegetation. Standards for Class SA and SB waters provide numerical and narrative criteria to meet designated uses for primary and secondary contact recreation (i.e. swimming, fishing, boating etc.) and supporting habitat for fish and other aquatic wildlife.

A copy of this Draft TMDL, the Massachusetts Estuaries Project Draft Final Technical Report for the Mashpee and Falmouth TMDL, and a further explanation of the TMDL Program are available on MA DEP's website at <http://www.mass.gov/dep/brp/wm/tmdls.htm>

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MA DEP) will hold a public meeting on July 28, 2005 from 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm at the Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (Main House), 149 Waquoit Highway, East Falmouth to discuss and respond to any public comments on the report.

This information is available in alternate format. Call Debra Doherty, ADA Coordinator, at 1-617-292-5565. TDD Service - 1-800-298-2207.

<http://www.mass.gov/dep> • Phone (508) 792-7650 • Fax (508) 792-7621

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The Department will consider all comments and the Draft Report will be revised as appropriate prior to submittal to EPA Region 1 for approval. All public comments, which should refer to the report number cited above, must be received in writing by 5:00 p.m. on August 11, 2005 and mailed to:

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Attn: Michael Ackerman