



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Department of Environmental Protection

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March 6, 2019

To All Interested Parties:

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) announces the availability of Draft Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Report for Total Nitrogen in the Chilmark Pond Estuarine System with watersheds in Chilmark. The report available for public comment is: DRAFT Chilmark Pond Estuarine System Total Maximum Daily Loads for Total Nitrogen (*Control # 451.0*). The TMDL and the Technical Report on which this report is based was prepared as part of the Massachusetts Estuaries Project (MEP) - a collaborative effort of the MassDEP, the University of Massachusetts School of Marine Science and Technology, the Martha's Vineyard Commission, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the US Geological Survey, and the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, as well as municipalities and watershed associations in southeastern Massachusetts, to identify and address nitrogen pollution in 70 estuaries in southeastern Massachusetts.

Federal Clean Water Act Section 303d and EPA's Water Quality Planning and Management Regulations (40 CFR Part 130) require states to develop TMDLs for water bodies not meeting Water Quality Standards. 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 comprehensive wastewater management plans designed to restore the water quality of impaired water bodies. The Massachusetts Estuaries Project Technical Reports provide data that demonstrate that these estuary systems are impaired because of nutrients, low dissolved oxygen levels, elevated chlorophyll *a* levels, and impaired benthic fauna habitat.

MassDEP has prepared Draft TMDLs for controlling excess nutrients (nitrogen), the primary cause of the loss of eelgrass beds (critical habitat to sustain marine life), undesirable increases in macro algae (less desirable than eel grass), and other associated impairments including algae blooms and depletion of oxygen for fish and shellfish populations in the above-listed embayments. The goal is to achieve Massachusetts Surface Water Quality Standards for Class SA and SB waters pertaining to dissolved oxygen, nutrients, aesthetics, excess plant biomass, and noxious aquatic plants. Standards provide numerical and narrative criteria to meet designated uses for primary and secondary contact recreation, i.e., swimming, fishing and boating. The primary "locally controllable" sources of nitrogen to these embayments is sanitary wastewater from residential septic systems and agricultural animal waste. Other controllable sources of nitrogen to this system include stormwater runoff and leaching fertilizers from lawns and agriculture.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) will hold a public meeting on Tuesday, April 2, 2019 at 5:00 pm in the 2nd floor meeting room at the Chilmark Town Hall, 401 Middle Road, Chilmark to discuss report findings and receive public comments on the report.

MassDEP will consider all comments and the Draft TMDL Report will be revised as appropriate prior to submittal to EPA Region 1 for approval. All comments (written and electronic) should refer to the specific report number cited above and must be received by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 3, 2019 and sent to Ms. Barbara Kickham at the following address:

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Watershed Management
8 New Bond Street
Worcester, MA, 01606
Attn: Ms. Barbara Kickham
Email: barbara.kickham@Mass.gov

Copies of this Draft TMDL Report for Total Nitrogen, and a further explanation of the TMDL Program and the Massachusetts Estuaries Project are available on MassDEP's website at:

<https://www.mass.gov/total-maximum-daily-loads-tmdls#13>

The Massachusetts Estuaries Project Final Technical Report for Chilmark Pond Estuarine System, on which the TMDLs were based, are available at:

<https://www.mass.gov/guides/the-massachusetts-estuaries-project-and-reports#islands-mep-reports>

MassDEP anticipates that the effective implementation of the TMDL will depend in large part on actions taken by local officials, citizen organizations and the general public to reduce pollution of this system. Some financial support for remedial activities is available from the state through existing competitive grant and loan programs.

If you have any questions or would like further information please contact me at (508) 767-2724.

Sincerely,



Barbara Kickham
TMDL Section Chief
Watershed Planning Program, Bureau of Water Resources