

# TOWN OF ORLEANS

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BOARD OF  
SELECTMEN

TOWN  
ADMINISTRATOR

June 2, 2010

Barnstable County Commissioners  
P.O. Box 427  
3195 Main Street, Superior Courthouse  
Barnstable, MA 02630

RE: Review of the MEP Methodology and Modeling by National Academy of Sciences

Dear Commissioners:

This letter seeks your support and assistance in the area of wastewater management. As you are undoubtedly aware, towns across the Cape are working hard to make progress on wastewater management to protect the environment of Cape Cod long-term. Cape-wide, we are facing infrastructure costs of between \$4 and \$8 billion for wastewater collection and treatment systems. Orleans, like many other towns, is having difficulty achieving consensus within the community regarding our wastewater management efforts in part due to questions regarding the perceived validity of the Massachusetts Estuaries Project (MEP) methodology and implementation. We do not believe that we can make substantial progress on finalizing and implementing our draft Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP) until the fundamental issues regarding the MEP have been addressed by an outside agency and an independent peer review has been conducted.

The issue of undertaking an independent peer review of the MEP is not new. In fact, in 2005 Orleans officials were promised by representatives of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) that a peer review would be undertaken. In addition, we were also informed by representatives of the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth (UMASS) Chancellor's Office that they welcomed a peer review of their MEP model. Unfortunately, the peer review effort was subsequently abandoned by MassDEP and we suspect this was due to the lack of access to the required data controlled by UMASS.

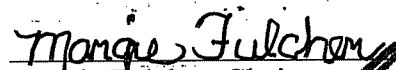
The MEP employs a complex set of computer models, referred to as the Linked-Model, to develop water quality remediation project requirements. Engineers and scientists have raised questions about the validity of the Linked-Model as a scientific basis for establishing necessary and effective remediation strategies. It is of the utmost importance that an independent peer review be undertaken to answer such questions and also to confirm and validate the MEP scientific work so that municipalities throughout the region have the necessary confidence in the Linked-Model and MEP methodology to go forward with the development and implementation of wastewater management strategies.

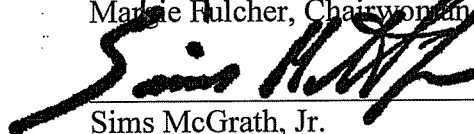
The Town of Orleans believes that the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) is uniquely qualified to undertake such a review and we therefore request your support on behalf of all Cape towns' to engage the NAS to review the MEP's scientific work. It is our sincere hope that the completion of this review will help the towns move forward on their wastewater planning initiatives with the reassurance that their efforts will result in the effective protection of their respective bays and estuaries.

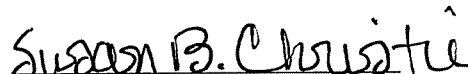
Critical to the success of any independent endeavor is the open support and sharing of scientific information by both the MassDEP and UMASS and to this end we would encourage their participation to ensure that the results are unassailable evidence of the quality of their work.

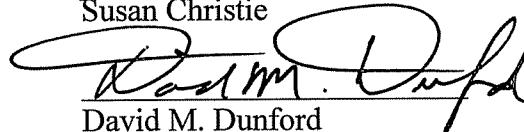
Thank you for your careful consideration of this matter and we look forward to working together in the best interest of all Cape Cod residents. If possible, we would appreciate a response to our request by June 16<sup>th</sup> so that we may approach our elected federal representatives knowing whether we can count on your continued support.

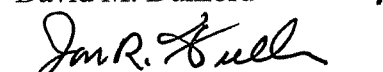
Sincerely,

  
Marie Fulcher, Chairwoman

  
Sims McGrath, Jr.

  
Susan Christie

  
David M. Dunford

  
Jon R. Fuller  
Orleans Board of Selectmen

Cc: Jean MacCormack, UMASS Dartmouth  
Laurie Burt, MassDEP  
Paul Neidzweicki, Cape Cod Commission  
All Cape Town Boards of Selectmen  
State Senator Robert O'Leary and Representative Sarah Peake  
U.S. Senators John Kerry and Scott Brown and Congressman William Delahunt