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Letter: Vote to Protect Wayland's Drinking Water

Deborah Dyson Diaz urges attendance at Special Town Meeting and a 'yes' vote on Article 2.

- September 28, 2012

Dear Editor:

Next Wednesday evening, Oct. 3, at 7:30 p.m., Wayland will hold a Special Town Meeting at the field house of the high school. Article 2 on the warrant should be of particular interest to all Wayland residents who value the purity of our drinking water. The article would create a town bylaw which would allow the Board of Health oversight for any planned application of herbicide or pesticide in the right-of-way of a utility company. It would enable the board to verify conformance with state laws for this type of activity.

Any resident abutting a utility right-of-way should have obvious interest in this article. In addition, I propose that all residents of Wayland should be concerned about this topic. The Nstar transmission line right-of-way which runs through the Oak Hill and Meadowview Road neighborhood traverses the capture zone of one of Wayland's town wells. Improper application of herbicides or other chemical substances in this zone could have a devastating impact on the water for this well. It could, in fact, contaminate this well and render the water unsafe for consumption for many years to come.

The town of Wayland has a history of protecting its natural resources, particularly its water. Although there are state laws which help protect our wells, recent Nstar activities do not provide this resident with a high level of confidence that the company is meticulous in ensuring compliance with these laws. Specifically, Nstar in its most recent declaration of intent to apply herbicides in the town of Wayland, posted such notice of intent after the date when the planned application was announced to begin. This was in violation of state requirements to provide advance notice of these activities.

The drinking water of Wayland is far too precious to allow for the possibility of accidental contamination by a utility company. Oversight by the Board of Health for chemical application in these rights-of-way will help prevent such incidents. I strongly urge all concerned residents of Wayland to attend the Wayland Special Town Meeting on Oct. 3, and to vote in favor of Article 2.

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