April 20, 2022

Eric Turkington, Chair Falmouth Water Quality Management Committee
Jamie Mathews, Chair Falmouth Conservation Commission
Chad Smith, Chair Mashpee Conservation Commission
Andrew McManus, Mashpee Conservation Agent
Alissa Bergeron, Falmouth Conservation Agent
Peter M. McConarty, Falmouth Director of Public Works
Catherine Laurent, Mashpee Director of Public Works

Citizens for the Protection of Waquoit Bay is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and protection of Waquoit Bay and its tributaries. As you know the dam restricting Red Brook under Red Brook Road at the Falmouth–Mashpee border failed last year. We are writing today to encourage you to prioritize improving the water quality of Waquoit Bay as part of your efforts to address the failed dam.

We note the comments from Dr. Brian Howes regarding the degraded water quality of the Waquoit Bay estuary. In July 2021 he stated, "There is no high water quality area remaining in Waquoit Bay; it's gone," and "Four years ago or five years ago it was here; now it's totally gone, and it's been gone every year for the last four years." Many of us remember Waquoit Bay as an ecologically vibrant place and now, in comparison, we witness its ongoing destruction from poor water quality, invasive species, and habitat destruction.

We further note that nitrogen loads in Waquoit Bay estuary remain well above the Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) established as far back as 2006 for Hamblin Pond and more recently for the Bay itself. As both Falmouth and Mashpee work to meet those legally binding TMDLs, we request you incorporate actions necessary to meet these standards in any municipal project with the potential to affect ground and surface waters that eventually flow into the Bay, including whatever plan is developed to address Red Brook since it flows into Hamblin Pond as part of the Waquoit Bay system.

Mashpee and Falmouth are working together along with consultants to resolve issues associated with the failed dam, ensure the safety of the road, and to evaluate options for ecological restoration of the area. We do not support solutions that risk increasing nutrient flow into Hamblin Pond, reduce the Bay's water quality, and make it even harder to achieve the TMDLs. A combination of restored stream flow and ecosystems such as open water with aquatic vegetation and wetlands designed to absorb nutrients provides the opportunity to both restore fish habitat and reduce the amount of nutrients being discharged into the Bay.

We strongly urge you to assign a stronger weight to options that will reduce the nutrient load into Waquoit Bay.

Sincerely,

Citizens for the Protection of Waquoit Bay

cc: Falmouth Water Quality Management Committee
Falmouth Conservation Commission
Mashpee Conservation Commission