



BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS

Cotuit Fire District Water Department

4300 FALMOUTH ROAD, P. O. BOX 451
COTUIT, MASS. 02635

Dear Water Customers,

Can Cotuit avoid the need to construct and operate a multi-million-dollar (\$17M+, by one engineering estimate) water treatment plant for the District? The only feasible way might be to address groundwater contamination at their sources.

Cotuit is fortunate to have very few obvious point water pollution sources. That is, pollution coming from a known point of origin such as a sewage treatment plant, or industrial outflow pipe. But we are unfortunate to have many non-point water pollution sources. Those are contaminants that are spread over and under our land, such as septic system effluent, lawns, and roads. Historically, it is the non-point sources that have been the most difficult and therefore the most costly to address.

The good news is, many sources of contamination belong to us all, and we can do something about them. We are responsible for what goes out of our homes and what we use on our lands. Septic issues can be difficult to manage, but as we innovate and develop better systems, those can be addressed.

It is easier to deal with the things we knowingly put onto our lands and roads. It is to our collective advantage to take responsibility and be mindful of the things we apply to our properties. One particular pollutant that is becoming more abundant in our water is Sodium. It does leach out of our septic systems, but it also comes from, and seems to be seasonally linked to, our application of road and walkway treatment with chemicals that melt ice. High levels of Sodium in drinking water have been linked to hyper-tension and blood pressure issues in sensitive persons.

We are working with the Town and State, which are responsible for the application of de-icing salts on Cotuit's public roadways, but we urge our residents to think twice about how they de-ice their own driveways and paths. We urge you to reduce the amount of any deicer you use and that you look for alternative deicers that do not contain Sodium. Calcium or Magnesium Chlorides are good alternatives that will provide the desired melting results and are less polluting to the aquifer than is the standard Sodium Chloride found in most road salt.

Bottom line is that reduction of deicers and switching to alternatives that do not contain Sodium will help reduce a pollutant that is increasing in our domestic water supply. This is particularly important in areas that contribute most directly to our public supply wells. Residents that live in our neighborhoods known as Cotuit Place, Little River Estates, Stratford Pond, and Cotuit Meadows, should be particularly cautious with de-icing applications both in terms of quantity used as well as the substances that are applied. Any neighborhood that has a formal management association, separate from the Town of Barnstable, and is responsible for their private roads should be particularly careful with road applications.

We all need to make a concerted effort to reduce Sodium from getting into our drinking water. Whether it is applied to roadways, driveways or walkways please reduce your applications and switch to alternatives that do not contain sodium.

Thank you all for your consideration, we are all in this together, let's make a difference.

Cotuit Fire District, Board of Water Commissioners.

M. Hopensteadt, Chairperson.