

October 4, 2022

To the Martha's Vineyard Commission,

My name is Bill Sweeney, I arrived here in 1995 and went through the Vineyard House; throughout my recovery the Lagoon has become a very special place to me. I have managed to make a substantial amount of money in the Lagoon fishing for several different species. Unfortunately, I don't have all the documentation for the first 12 years, but I have records from 2007 to today. And my receipts will show that I have made a substantial amount of money, but more than that this pond has saved my life, it's where I find serenity and clarity. Being able to go out and fish has only increased my respect and admiration for the Lagoon.

But since then, I have seen a decline in cultural fishing traditions which shaped the Island. I have seen the loss of areas where we can fish due to the number of boats, increase in the amount of pollution and nutrients that make their ways into our ponds. We are adding bigger boats with more horsepower, to this fragile habitat in the west arm of the Lagoon. This pond is screaming for help and I ask myself, "is this what we really need?" This place is special; we need to start treating it that way.

Sincerely,

*Billy*

Billy Sweeney  
Vineyard Haven Resident