

Daniel Kopans

To the Members of the Martha's Vineyard Commission:

We are writing to you because of our deep concerns about Lagoon Pond. Our family has been on the Lagoon for almost 50 years and we have watched with sadness as the quality of the water has deteriorated. We had robust eel grass off of the beach which is now gone and the bottom, which used to support scallops and lobster has now become a wasteland. We all know that the Lagoon is severely threatened with further deterioration. I find it incredibly disappointing and surprising that, given its fragility, there is an effort to expand the number of power boats using the Pond and all of the pollution that will accompany this expansion. The economic benefit for a very small group will almost certainly be offset as fewer and fewer people want to come to Martha's Vineyard as the water quality further deteriorates.

The even poorer quality of the West arm is a testament to the marina and boating facilities that have been there. Ideally, to improve the water quality in the Lagoon, these should be phased out. It is disappointing, to say the least, that the goal is further expansion. Despite all of the assurances, more power boats will mean more pollution from the boats themselves (hydrocarbon pollution and heads), the washing of these boats, and the runoff from the land from extra parking and hardening of the surface of the parking area. Assurances are simply distractions. There is no way that this will not lead to further pollution of the Lagoon.

Not only will the storage of so many more boats pollute and further degrade the quality of the Lagoon water, but their movement in and out of the storage area will lead to further boat traffic on this limited resource. It is already dangerous for kayakers, windsurfers, and sail boaters not to mention swimmers, as power boats speed up and down the Lagoon at incredible speeds with no real effort to police the rules. Boaters do not have to be licensed, and every day we see someone towing people at high speeds with the driver of the boat looking backward and not ahead at the others in the water. Increasing the number of boats in the Lagoon will only multiply the risk for accidents. Even if boats leaving the West arm are intending to leave the Lagoon, many will "take the tour" and will first head down the Lagoon before leaving under the drawbridge. The boat traffic will be greatly increased.

I recognize the fact that people have a right to own boats and that they would like to share in the fun of boating out of Martha's Vineyard, but that is what harbors are for. Lagoon Pond, as an endangered body, should not be considered a harbor subject to interminable expansion. It is obvious that "history repeats itself". Why would we want to look back and lament the demise of the Lagoon because of obvious erroneous decisions to increase the number of power boats in an already damaged resource?

Sincerely yours:

Dr. and Mrs. Daniel Kopans