

Dear Commissioners

We are recreational shellfishermen (women) and thus stakeholders in Tisbury. For many years we and our families have shellfished throughout the year in the West Arm of the Lagoon in areas to be affected by the proposed floating dock expansion of the Martha's Vineyard Shipyard. We appreciate the importance of a working waterfront and that the Shipyard wishes to maintain shellfishing in the area, however we believe it likely that the proposed expansion will damage the shellfish environment and thereby do harm to an important aspect of Island Life.

More knowledgeable people than we (Department of Machine Fisheries of Massachusetts; Martha's Vineyard Shellfish Group; Tisbury Shellfish Department) have commented on how the shipyard expansion is likely to adversely affect the shellfish population. To briefly list

1. All boat engines discharge some byproducts into the water
2. A poorly functioning engine discharges gasoline and oil and there is always danger of a spill
3. The gradual leeching of bottom paint introduces copper and other toxic chemicals into the water
4. The prop of an engine disturbs the bottom of a shallow lagoon
5. Dredging disturbs the bottom environment for shellfish
6. The washing of boats allows cleansers to enter the water
7. Birds landing on the wharf increase E. coli counts

The MA DMF has concluded that the proposed dock will "reduce access to recreational and commercial fishermen by a minimum of 2 acres and possibly more."

Shellfishing is historically a vital part of Island life and heritage starting with the Wampanoag and continuing to the present day. It is important commercially - supporting year round Tisbury families over many generations and it is important for recreation, reminding many Tisbury residents of the joys of living on Martha's Vineyard

The environment for shellfish in the lagoon is already challenged by residential and commercial development on its borders. At present there are almost no shellfish left in the upper lagoon (the southern and larger part). If shellfishing were to be lost in the West Arm it would not likely recover. We appreciate the importance of the Martha's Vineyard Shipyard to the Island economy and community; however, the expansion of the Shipyard would likely have a significant negative effect on shellfish and we think it should not be approved.

Sincerely

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