

Dear MV Commissioners:

As a lifelong Vineyarder and someone who grew up in and around the Edgartown Great Pond, I want to bear witness to the inestimable value of this unique natural resource. The Great Pond and its bounty have long provided Islanders, including my father, grandfather, brother, sons and daughters with a livelihood. Its waters have given generations of others as well a way to earn a decent living.

I was appointed to the Edgartown Shellfish because of my family's deep involvement in the fishing industry here on Martha's Vineyard. The Shellfish Committee has a public/private partnership with the Great Pond Foundation and as Emily Reddington has testified at the previous public meetings, this irreplaceable island treasure is beginning to make a comeback. Eelgrass, sure sign of a healthy pond, is just starting to reappear. If all goes right, then the crabs, oysters, birds and fish and eventually, if protected by caring citizens, a healthy balance between people and nature can be re-established. This project would jeopardize that slow and arduous comeback.

As a former MV Commissioner, I understand the role you play in the Island's future. When weighing the costs and benefits of this project, please consider the amount of time and money our community has invested in Edgartown Great Pond's restoration over the last 30 years. Together we have brought back resources that once again allow fishermen/women to earn a sustainable income from the Pond. Should this development be approved and the health of Edgartown Great Pond falters, the cost of future pond restoration may be cost prohibitive. It may also not be possible at all. Protecting resources that we currently have is much less expensive than attempting to restore them in the future.

I urge you to take to heart the words of Jim Athearn, as he speaks of the over-development of our home and to Emily Reddington, who has presented the science behind the problem of excessive nitrogen and other run-offs from this proposed development of large homes, lawns and swimming pools. Hundreds of homes in the watershed need to be sewerred. We should not be adding a huge new number but focusing on existing homes and how we can minimize their impact on the Pond.

We have a generational duty to protect what we have been given by nature and pass it down in the best possible form to future generations. One sure way we can do this is by denying this proposed development.

Thank you,
Madeline Fisher
Edgartown