

Martha's Vineyard Commission
P.O. Box 1447, Oak Bluffs, MA 02557
Attn: Mr. Paul Foley
Email: foley@mvcommission.org

Cc: West Tisbury Zoning Board of Appeals
P.O. Box 278, West Tisbury, MA 02575
Attn: Julie Keefe, Board Administrator
Email: zba@westtisbury-ma.gov

Re: Objection to Proposed Verizon Cell Tower on Tisbury Great Pond in West Tisbury

Dear Mr. Foley,

We are writing to voice our objections to the proposed cell tower that Verizon wants to erect off Town Cove on Tisbury Great Pond. While we do see that Verizon is trying to improve its cell service, it is hard to believe that the proposed approach is the best or only, possible choice. To us,, this proposed tower is flies in the face of and is incompatible with all West Tisbury's highly successful efforts, thanks to its buried lines and strict zoning, to maintain its stunningly graceful, historic, natural and agricultural character. Such a cell tower would forever change Tisbury Great Pond's uniquely stunning environment, and significantly alter the pristine, bucolic vistas enjoyed by all.

We have come to Martha's Vineyard *since we were children*. We've vacationed here each summer, with our own children, since they were babies. We now own the former Warner property, at 81 Oldfields Path in Chilmark, where we are seasonal residents, as well as riparian owners on West Tisbury Great Pond. Our whole family sails, kayaks, swims in, fishes, crabs, writes poetry, photographs, birds, and paints-and *truly cherishes* what we have in our place on the Pond. The long views of wild edges, farmland, and the incomparable scenic beauty, are something our whole family values beyond measure..

You see, we believe that West Tisbury Great Pond is nothing short of a unique international treasure! Please understand that we are, therefore, deeply concerned by the mere notion of this proposed Verizon tower. We know such a thing would set a terrible precedent for the MVC, and be the first of what could grow to be a hideous blight on the incomparable beauty of the island's landscape. Our specific objections to this proposed cell tower as are follows:

We are well aware that scenic preservation island long has been the guiding value and policy objective for Martha's Vineyard. This mandate is exactly what has sustained and kept the island's character intact. The stunningly pristine character that has resulted from careful thought, is what makes the island proud-and has drawn and continues to draw, and restore Presidents, world weary families, tourists, and artists alike, year after year.

It is also THIS rare value for scenic beauty that has set Martha's Vineyard apart from other places; all too many of whom have come to their senses far too late! We encourage you not to suddenly depart from that set of values! The outcome could be that we'll have the island wind up looking like a pin cushion- stuck with 80 foot tall, vertical pins. Yet, we fear that could all so easily happen- if great care is not taken, now!

We are also well aware that in such matters, coastal and scenic wetlands are especially sensitive and vulnerable! Of course, Tisbury Great Pond, as part of the terminal moraine- is practically at sea level-and the land around it is quite flat. This very unique to the island, flat landscape is the very thing that creates the stunning and quite incomparable long views, right up to its coves and swamps, and its neighboring forests and fields.

We ask you to note that such a flatland is therefore a particularly *obscene* choice for such a tower, as the horizontal flatness of the land itself is what would render such a tower so HIGHLY visible. Indeed, the tower, at 80', would readily be looming and seen from every vantage point, all over the publicly accessible Tisbury Great Pond. We remind you that such a cell tower would be by far the tallest structure to project above the level of the horizon. (The only other being the much lower West Tisbury Church steeple which, while noticeable, is an elegant and historic man-made feature.)

We are aware that the height of such a structure would also be significantly higher than is currently allowable under zoning bylaws. *Please, please do not try to make "an exception" and allow this!* Verizon's cell tower, as proposed, would be a HUGE vertical, visually jarring element, extending well more than 40' above the comparatively, low coastal oak forested landscape. We wish to make it known that we strongly object to the proposed fake pine alternative "look", as well-as we believe that would only be even more out of place. *And let's not forget: this "thing" will also have to be lit at night, especially as it is near the island's major airport!*

However, from where we stand, the whole island has EVER so much more to lose, IF this Verizon cell tower were to be allowed. Not only would such a decision set a very ugly and regressive precedent, it would significantly weaken the MVC's critically important role as steward for the island's visible, scenic and historic character. The MVC would also be obligated to allow similar concessions to competitors, and therefore, hereafter, we would stand to lose its authority to stop other companies from locating cell towers in coastal and Great Pond locations-all to the permanent detriment of the scenic beauty of Martha's Vineyard.

We think that is far too great a price to pay! This is a critical, and HIGHLY compelling reason to seek and examine ALL the feasible and less intrusive locations and alternatives to this 80' cell tower. We know alternatives are available, and have not been fully evaluated. As you probably recall, when McDonalds wanted to build in historic towns and settings, they were told by a few Towns (Freeport, ME being one of them), that they had to conform to the zoning and character of those places. And conform McDonalds did- to the benefit of all the work that those Towns and counties had done, before McDonalds came along. So, why aren't we requiring Verizon to use weather vanes, buoys, steeples, and other such existing high points-all very much in keeping with our island-as their means of cell transmittal? Surely, we can work with what we have, and show some great Yankee ingenuity, here!

Thank you for this opportunity to be heard, and for considering our thoughts.

Sincerely,
Margaret and Frederick Weiss