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Tisbury Conservation Commission
Tisbury, MA.

December 26, 2012

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express my concern in response to a letter sent to abutters from Epsilon Associates Maynard, MA. On Dec. 6, 2012, regarding the application of the Comcast and NSTAR companies to install a cable which affects the beach owned by the West Chop Trust and continues along Squantum Avenue, Tisbury, MA.

It is unfortunately not possible for me as a summer resident taxpayer to be present at this meeting, scheduled with relatively short notice given its importance, in the dead of winter.

The beach in question is one of the most environmentally rich and sensitive beaches in the area. Due to intentionally limited use by its owners who are mindful of its pristine quality, it has become a model for the evolution of a viable natural area. Over the years rocks and sand have become filled with a protective area of salt meadow grass and high tide shrubbery which insulate the upland from the edge of the marsh. Sand dunes are slowly but steadily forming. It should be noted that in the recent storm, Sandy, there was no erosion since the tidal marsh was able to absorb the storm surges and wave energy.

Piping Plovers use the area as a nesting ground. Every year a sizable area is cordoned off for over 6 weeks. The owners of the beach are respectful of and encourage maintaining this as a safe nesting site.

The following are questions that I hope will be asked. Large project proposals such as this one always come with well intentioned promises that there will be no environmental damage. Inevitably there is damage.

1. The large machinery necessary for this work will have to enter and exit a narrow dirt road ill-suited to such invasive use. The canopy of trees risk damage. Are trees already pegged for removal to make way for the army of poles proposed to line this dirt road.
2. What would be required for maintenance after the initial installation. Experience has shown that Cable TV and Internet often break down. What kind of heavy equipment would be required for repairs, especially for a cable underground.
3. What is the precedent for bringing this kind of cable under environmentally sensitive land?
4. Why can't Comcast and NSTAR collaborate to bring in their cables at the other points of entry they already use and which would have no environmental impact.

I realize the difficult challenge for a town board when up against the proposal of a powerful company such as Comcast. However, since the fragile beauty of Martha's Vineyard is because of its magnificent but threatened beaches, this request requires extra special vigilance. I am hopeful that you as a board will be brave stewards of this small but environmentally exquisite site and reject this request.

Sincerely,

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cc Southeast Regional
Department of
Environmental
Protection Office