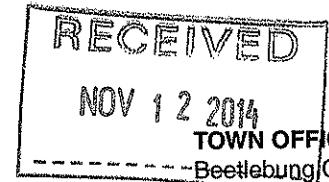


www.chilmarkma.gov

TOWN OF CHILMARK
CHILMARK, MASSACHUSETTS



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November 5, 2014

Martha's Vineyard Commission
33 New York Ave.
Oak Bluffs, Ma. 02557


Dear: Commissioners

The Chilmark Board of Selectmen is strongly opposed to any proposal for sand mining in Vineyard Sound.

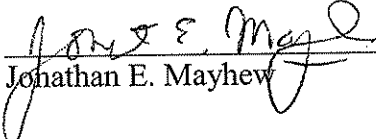
The current draft of the Massachusetts Ocean Plan identifies Vineyard Sound as a "Sand Resource Area." We think this designation is a mistake. The area stretching from Menemsha and the Vineyard's North Shore over to Cuttyhunk and the Elizabeth Islands is a valuable fisheries area for both commercial and recreational fishermen. Our local fishers harvest fluke, winter flounder, bluefish, striped bass, bonito, scup, sea bass, mussels, conchs, sea clams, ocean quahogs, and other species from this rich natural resource. We want to see this area protected and unspoiled and not converted into an area for sand mining with big dredges and barges.

Sand Mining is disruptive to the benthic environment at the bottom of Vineyard Sound. The top six inches of mud and sand on the ocean floor contain thousands of small organisms (sea worms, shrimp, tiny shellfish, fish eggs, etc.) that are all part of the base of the food chain in our waters. Juvenile fish such as winter flounder scour the bottom and feed all day long on these small creatures. Our local channel whelks (conchs) graze along the bottom and lay their eggs in long egg sacs that they attach to the sandy bottom. Dredging up this bottom sand would disrupt and destroy all the living creatures that we depend on for a healthy marine environment.

The Chilmark Selectmen believe that sand mining is a bad idea for our ocean environment. If the Massachusetts Ocean Plan is designed to protect our precious ocean resource then we should not encourage sand mining, especially not in a rich resource area such as Vineyard Sound.


Chairman William N. Rossi


Warren M. Doty


Jonathan E. Mayhew