



Nantucket Land & Water Council

Nantucket's Environmental Advocate

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October 24, 2023

The Honorable Jacob R. Oliveira, Senate Chair
Senate Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government
24 Beacon Street, Room 504
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Carole A Fiola, House Chair
House Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government
24 Beacon Street, Room 504
Boston, MA 02133

Re: Support of H.2104: *An Act relative to the preservation of wetlands and water resources in Chapter 40B applications*

Dear Chair Oliveira, Chair Fiola, and Members of the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government,

My name is Emily Molden and I am the Executive Director of the Nantucket Land & Water Council. My education background is in environmental sciences and prior to my current position I worked as an Ecologist for the Nantucket Land & Water Council for 15 years.

The Land & Water Council is one of several non-profit conservation organizations based on Nantucket Island, but what sets us apart is our role as an advocacy organization. We have been working to help protect and preserve the island's natural resources, including Nantucket's groundwater, wetlands, fresh and marine waters, for nearly 50 years.

Serving as an environmental watchdog we review development proposals before local regulatory agencies. I, personally, served in this capacity for 15 years reviewing all applications before our local Conservation Commission and attending all their public hearings.

In addition to our advocacy work we conduct scientific research on the health of our freshwater ponds, the Harmful Algal Blooms that are becoming more and more prevalent, as well as the declining health of our eelgrass beds found within Nantucket's two main harbors. We are intimately familiar with the land use impacts that come with increased development adjacent to our wetland resources.

The Town of Nantucket and our community have rallied around multiple efforts to address our shortage of year-round and affordable housing and have been making meaningful progress. We have also experienced the permitting process of multiple 40B developments, some of which the Land & Water Council has been involved in supporting through holding associated open space in conservation restrictions, and some of which we have been involved in opposing as a direct result of their impacts to sensitive habitat and water resources.

The availability of vacant land on Nantucket has been steadily decreasing for decades, and the rate of development continues to put more and more pressure on the island's waters.

As an island with a sole source aquifer, which is already under incredible pressure, our sandy soils and extensive wetlands, we, like many other regions of the state, rely SO heavily on the implementation and enforcement of our wetland regulations to protect our waters.

We Pay Attention • We Raise Awareness • We Take Action



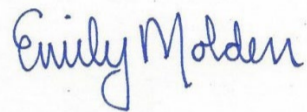
I have witnessed first-hand how many of the local buffer zones and performance standards under our Bylaw, that make up our local Wetland Protection Regulations, are critical to address the needs of our local wetland and groundwater environment. The state regulations are not sufficient in this regard.

I am submitting this testimony today, writing personally as an Ecologist, as well as an organization with nearly 50 years of local resource protection experience, in support of H2104 which will allow, through the 40B regulatory process, greater local discretion over natural resource protection, specifically the enforcement of those standards that our towns and our communities have adopted to more specifically protect the sensitive wetland resources of the Commonwealth.

I respectfully request a favorable report of this Bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Emily Molden". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Emily Molden
Executive Director