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CAPE COD
COMMISSION

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October 12, 2022

Michael Herman
Vice-Chair, Orleans Select Board
19 School Road
Orleans, MA 02653

Dear Mr. Herman,

I am writing in support of efforts by the Town of Orleans to reduce the impacts of nutrients on water resources. Healthy water resources are critical to the local and regional economy. Excess nutrients, specifically nitrogen and phosphorus, from controllable sources like wastewater, fertilizer, and stormwater continue to impact Cape Cod's water quality and bold actions are necessary to protect, preserve, and restore the ecological integrity of fresh and marine surface waters.

While nitrogen inputs vary by watershed, the Massachusetts Estuaries Project (MEP) generally identifies fertilizers as the second leading contributor of nitrogen to coastal waters; second only to nitrogen from the region's extensive reliance on on-site septic systems. Fertilizer contributes, on average, 9-10% of the nitrogen load in Cape Cod watersheds.

The Cape Cod Area-Wide Water Quality Management Plan (208 Plan), completed pursuant to Section 208 of the Federal Clean Water Act and certified and approved by the Governor of Massachusetts and the United States Environmental Protection Agency provides a framework for local and regional action to reduce nutrient inputs and improve water quality. Managing fertilizer application rates to lawns, golf courses, athletic facilities, and other land uses is a strategy identified in the 208 Plan for reducing nitrogen inputs to surface waters. A range of strategies, targeting a range of controllable sources of nutrients, will be necessary to successfully address water quality degradation across the region.

I look forward to continued progress as Orleans works to address this critical environmental and economic challenge.

Sincerely,

Kristy Senatori
Executive Director