

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – September 17, 2013

INFORMATION FROM THE  
**CAPE COD COMMISSION**  
BARNSTABLE COUNTY



CAPE COD  
COMMISSION

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## CCC Releases Cape Cod Pesticide and Fertilizer Use Inventory Report for 60-day Comment Period

*Inventory and Survey Document Cape-wide Uses; Comments Accepted until November 16*

BARNSTABLE COUNTY, MA – A draft study, released today for a 60-day comment period, found that nearly 6 million pounds of fertilizer and 1.3 million pounds of pesticides are applied across Cape Cod annually, with residential use representing the largest portion in each case.

The study, entitled “Cape Cod Pesticide and Fertilizer Use Inventory,” was prepared by the Horsley Witten Group (Sandwich, MA) for the Cape Cod Commission. Funding for the study was provided through a \$35,000 appropriation from the Barnstable County FY12 budget.

The draft report, dated June 2013, provides additional data about sources and amounts of nitrogen that contribute excess nutrients to the groundwater and eventually coastal waterways.

The study takes a comprehensive look at fertilizer and pesticide use on different land uses across Cape Cod. The findings are based on a compilation of data from a variety of sources including parcel-based land use classification, Massachusetts Department of Agriculture and Recreation pesticide use reports, discussions with Cape-based landscaping, golf course, and agriculture professionals, an inventory of local retailers, and existing literature on the topic.

To help develop the Cape-wide residential use estimates, Horsley Witten Group used information gathered by researchers at the Center for Policy Analysis at the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth to measure attitudes and behaviors of Cape residents. A total of 550 telephone interviews were conducted with Cape Cod households from June 27, 2012 through July 6, 2012.

The resulting report, "Residential Fertilizer and Pesticide Use on Cape Cod: Results of Residential Phone Survey," notes that fertilizer management and education efforts will need to be tailored to specific populations to be most effective. The report is attached to the draft study as an appendix.

"We have been saying for some time now that no single solution to wastewater management will solve the problem of excess nitrogen in our coastal waters," says Executive Director Paul Niedzwiecki. "The study and the inventory paint an additional, clear picture: Residential application of fertilizer is an important – and controllable – source of nitrogen that should be addressed along with our other nutrient-management targets. Education and support for better management practices may be our best approach for this contributor to our water quality problem."

### **Pesticide/Fertilizer Use Inventory conclusions:**

- Pesticide use to manage utility rights-of-way accounts for 0-1% of Cape-wide pesticide use depending on the portion of the utility right-of-way sprayed each year.
- Individual homeowners are the largest users of both pesticides (more than 70%) and fertilizers (more than 80%).
- Golf courses are the second largest users of pesticides (8.7%) and fertilizers (15%).
- Most non-residential pesticide users are regulated and applications can only be conducted by certified professionals.
- Reduction in total use and improved management practices should focus on residential users.

As an overarching conclusion, the Center for Policy Analysis residential fertilizer-use report found: "Many Cape residents are uncertain about the products they use, the form of product that is applied...and the frequency of application."

### **Key report findings:**

- 57% of residents apply fertilizer on their property, either themselves or through a contractor.
- 85.2% believe that the use of fertilizers, weed control products, and pest control products have a significantly negative or somewhat negative effect on the environment.
- 46.7% of those who use fertilizer or pest control products report that they do not use alternative lawn care practices because they don't know enough about them.
- 62% of those who fertilize apply the fertilizers themselves.
- 24% of those who apply fertilizers themselves purchased them from a nursery or garden store (as opposed to a home supply store, a hardware store, or a discount store).
- The average property owner who fertilizes applies approximately 59 pounds (lbs.) of fertilizer to his/her property annually.
- 67% of those who apply pesticides purchased the products themselves.

- 15% of those who apply pesticides themselves purchased them from a nursery or garden store.

These reports, prepared by consultants under contract to the Cape Cod Commission, reinforce the need for comprehensive action to reduce the use of nitrogen-based fertilizers and pesticides to improve and maintain water quality.

The draft can be found on the Cape Cod Commission's web site:

[www.capecodcommission.org/departments/technicalservices/water/pestfertstudies](http://www.capecodcommission.org/departments/technicalservices/water/pestfertstudies)

Please submit comments by November 16, 2013, to: [study@capecodcommission.org](mailto:study@capecodcommission.org)  
or by US mail to:

Cape Cod Commission  
P.O. Box 226  
Barnstable, MA 02630

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**ABOUT THE CAPE COD COMMISSION:**

Cape Cod Commission is the regional land use planning, economic development, and regulatory agency created in 1990 to serve the citizens and 15 towns that comprise Barnstable County, Massachusetts, better known as Cape Cod. The Commission works toward maintaining a healthy balance between economic progress and environmental vitality. "Keeping a special place special" describes the agency's mission to protect the region's unique qualities. The 19-member volunteer Cape Cod Commission board represents a wide spectrum of the community and provides oversight for a staff of 40 professionals. The Commission is responsible for regional planning, policy, and regulations to help manage growth, and the agency supports the Cape's 15 towns with cost-effective planning and technical services. For more information, visit: [www.capecodcommission.org](http://www.capecodcommission.org)