

## **2015 Deadline for NSTAR Spraying Public Comments has passed.**

Senator Dan Wolf, a constant opponent of the Nstar vegetation management plan which uses chemical defoliation on public and private lands, has secured an extension for public comments. The 45 day extension expired on May 11. Senator Wolf's letter to Secretary Matthew Beaton, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, concluded,

**I recognize that Eversource is not the only offender on the list of organizations which use herbicides or pesticides, nor is it the most egregious. However, I do believe that the company can act as a leader, and serve as a model for other organizations to follow. Finding less-impactful alternatives to mitigating unwanted vegetation with respect to the surrounding ecosystem and the Cape's fragile water cycle is an important part of our obligations as representatives of the public, as neighbors to one another, and as parties concerned with the long-term vitality of the region.**

**[Download/read the letter from Senator Wolf to Secretary Beaton](#)**

Nstar, newly named Eversource, has insisted that the spraying is safe, despite lack of scientific testing of the mixtures and surfactants it uses. In addition, the Cape has sandy soil, a sensitive water supply, a sole source aquifer with no alternate source of water, and an unpredictable wind. We don't know the effect of the spray on bees, butterflies and babies. How would we know if these toxic chemicals are already in our water supply. The towns say they cannot afford the expensive tests. There are no drinking water standards for pregnant women, fetuses, frail elderly and health compromised people. But yet we are told that drinking lots of water every day makes us healthy.

Last fall's spraying incursion in Harwich included the direct spraying of two women and their horses at Sea Horse Farm. MDAR investigation concluded that the farm owner's body rash was caused by diesel fumes from the backpack sprayers. Though the men were asked by farm owner Clare Bergh not to spray during that windy period, they responded that the spray was harmless and refused to stop. In a meeting before the Harwich selectmen, Bergh was incredulous about the MDAR investigation results. She said that she has used backpack sprayers herself for years as a farm owner and never had a problem. Chemical testing was inconclusive because tests do not exist for some of the pesticide mixtures.

All the pesticides used have warning labels which states sprayers should avoid wind drift. Because the EPA has said this is not a legally enforceable warning, Nstar has sprayed in windy, rainy conditions that violate common sense and public health, without giving proper warning to abutters of the easements. The sprayers are on a tight schedule — about a month to cover designated acreage.

If you are an abutter, check your deed carefully.