

1. **We Need You to Weigh in to Get our Harbor Dredged**

The Army Corps of Engineers will soon be making a decision on where to allocate leftover dredging funds, and rural communities like Wellfleet will be prioritized. It's a very competitive process, and Wellfleet needs to show it has widespread support from its shellfishing community.

The following page is a sample letter that you can edit to stress how important it is to your livelihoods – or to you as a recreational shellfisherman – that Wellfleet Harbor gets dredged. The sample letter has a highlighted area for you to make the letter specific to you, as well as many bullets to choose from; you can include a few that make sense to you or feel free to write your own letter.

For recreational folks, please just speak from your experiences harvesting or using Wellfleet Harbor recreationally. Every letter will help our efforts!

Deadline: We need these to be in D.C, by next Friday, Nov. 2.

Options for sending your letter:

1) Print your letter, sign it and scan it into a PDF. (*We are happy to help here at the Shellfish Department; call to set up a time: 508-349-0325.*) Email it to Ray@FederalRelations.com. He will package them all together and get them to the right people at each agency.

2) Deliver your letter to the Town Administrator Dan Hoort's office or the Shellfish Constable by Thursday, November 1st. The TA's office will then overnight all letters to Ray with receipt for Friday, November 2nd. He will package them all together and get them to the right people at each agency.

Remember: the squeaky wheel gets the grease! Let's flood the Army Corps with request letters so that Wellfleet will get the support funding that it needs to complete the dredging!

October XX, 2018

The Honorable R.D. James
Assistant Secretary of the Army – Civil Works
Department of the Army
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20310-0108

Dear Assistant Secretary James:

I am one of hundreds of people in Wellfleet who make their livings from the waters of Wellfleet Harbor. [Insert statement about your livelihood, e.g. I have a grant where I farm oysters and quahogs and employ xx people, I harvest oysters and quahogs in the wild and support my family, I have a wholesale shellfish sales company, etc.] As a xxx [fisherman, wholesaler, employee of a farm], I am proud to be providing a healthy source of protein to the public.

With more than 150 wild commercial harvesters, 140 grant lease holders and many more employees, shellfishing is a primary year-round economic driver for the Town. Wellfleet has a year-round population of about 3,100, therefore approximately 15 percent of the population is involved in shellfishing, not including restaurants and fish buyers and markets. Even though a small town, it boasts a big economic impact from shellfishing: At \$6.3M, we are eighth in the Commonwealth for value of our seafood landings. Wellfleet is first in the state of Massachusetts for both wild oyster and farmed quahog sales. In addition, we sell more than 850 recreational shellfishing permits, allowing the general public to harvest shellfish for a sea-to-table family experience.

We are in desperate need of having our harbor dredged because of many negative impacts on our businesses, the safety of harbor users, potential human health implications and the long-term sustainability of our fisheries. Some of our concerns are:

- The harbor has been covered in a silty sediment we call “black mayonnaise.” It smothers and kills shellfish, impacting both wild and farmed grant production, as well as thwarting the town’s water quality mitigation efforts.
- The Town invests \$25,000 a year in shellfish propagation, which could be all for naught if the seed gets smothered by black mayonnaise.
- The black mayonnaise is particularly harmful in Chipman’s Cove, which is adjacent to the prospective dredging area, where the silt is covering both adult oysters and cultch and is having a negative effect on juvenile recruitment. This was our premier recreational and commercial harvesting area, and due to our management closure, it also functions as our spawning sanctuary. It is a shadow of its former self. In previous years, 70-80 people turned out for the season opening. Now we are lucky to get half of that. It is also the place where we allow grant holders to use spat collecting devices to fish for seed oysters, and the silt has greatly impeded the usual natural sets of baby oysters.
- Due to the silting in of the harbor, it narrows the window of time when boats can navigate in and out of the harbor, which means that access to deepwater grants is restricted as we have to wait for water to come in before we can get back to the dock, and in addition, it presents a serious safety issue if any injury or illness were to occur, no one can get in or out.

- The lack of water causes significant difficulties with marine patrols of our shellfishery. This is particularly worrisome during the vibrio Vp management season, which requires shellfishermen to harvest and ice oysters within two hours of them being exposed by the receding tide. Those shellfishermen who fish by boat must leave shore early to harvest and get oysters on ice within two hours of exposure. Then, they must sit and wait for the tide to come in to allow them to return to shore and market. To effectively monitor the boat fishery, the shellfish department needs to follow this same schedule, which means a commitment offshore of six or more hours that sometimes requires leaving the dock before sunrise or returning after sunset. Not a good use of our town resources, but a necessary one.
- The black mayonnaise creates an anoxic environment that promotes the growth of bacteria, which could have future impacts on public health as shellfish are filter feeders.
- This silty sediment also promotes electrolysis, which degrades metal equipment and releases metals into the harbor. That means we have to replace equipment, motors, commercial fishing vessels at great expense.
- These are all major hindrances now, but as the harbor gets worse, the economic impacts will be greater.

The first phase of dredging requires the Army Corps of Engineers to dredge the harbor channel. All required environmental studies have been completed and the federal and state agencies involved have approved of the town's effort to secure the necessary permits. The Chief of the Navigation Section of the US Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, and his staff have visited Wellfleet and agreed with the dire assessment of our harbor. He indicated that the project could begin in 2018, if funding is provided. The Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2015 provides 100% funding for this type of project with many towns nationally competing for funding. I urge you to advocate as strongly as you can to secure funding for the dredging of Wellfleet Harbor.

Sincerely,

Xxxx

Business name and/or occupation

Address

City, State, Zip

Email

Phone

copy: The Honorable Ed Markey, United States Senate
 The Honorable Elizabeth Warren, United States Senate
 The Honorable Bill Keating, U.S. House of Representatives
 The Honorable Mick Mulvaney, Office of Management and Budget (OMB)