



## MEMO

**TO:** Tisbury Board of Health

**FROM:** President Courtney Marek and CEO Ryan Castle

**DATE:** November 6, 2023

**SUBJECT:** Please Revise Your New Title V Regulations to delete Point of Sale Requirement

On behalf of our members that live and work in Tisbury, we thank you for taking up the priority of clean water infrastructure.

As an Association, supporting clean water infrastructure is a significant priority of our advocacy work. We are writing to ask you to reconsider a portion of your new regulation, as your reconsideration will help with year-round home affordability and also maintain our common goals for clean water.

**We would like you to consider deleting the changes you made to the requirement to upgrade to an Innovative/Alternative (I/A) septic system at the time of sale if there is a working Title 5 septic system.** Instead, we urge you to follow the model recently adopted by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection.

While we recognize and appreciate the availability of ARPA funds for installing I/A systems, these grants are not simply enough. While they can go up to \$35,000, that does not cover the removal of the current septic system, the installation costs of the I/A, nor the associated landscaping costs that go into installing a new system. Forcing those with a working Title 5 system to upgrade will deprive these homeowners of access to tax benefits that are afforded only when there is a failing system, according to the Title 5 regulations. **The Commonwealth of Massachusetts recently tripled the septic tax credit for these homeowners, but only when for a failed system and such, those with a working Title V who are forced to upgrade will not be eligible for this tax credit.**

The housing crisis, which we know you are keenly aware of, is a real concern. We all know the Vineyard housing market and Tisbury's in particular has seen prices rising quickly over the last few years, but one of the pockets where there has been more affordability is in these watersheds being targeted.

To underscore the impact on homeowners, more than one third of the homes that have sold in the watersheds in the last year are priced below \$1 million, which is the target market for year-round families trying to make a living on the island. The average priced home that sold in these areas over the last year was \$1.5 million - well below the island's average of \$2.2 million. This action quite simply makes the more attainable properties in Tisbury more unaffordable.

We ask you to revise your regulations and, at the least, take out the requirement to upgrade a working Title 5 system at the time of sale.