

Community Activism: Regulating Leafblowers, Protecting Wildlife & More

June 16, 2026

Opportunities for Improvement

- Tighten existing—or enact new—policy for municipal facilities and operations
- Tighten existing—or enact new—town bylaws or regulations

Policy Opportunities

- Pesticide reduction
- Nutrient reduction
- Rodenticide ban
- Tree protection
- Outdoor lighting / dark skies
- Leaf blower operation
- Native planting
- Your ideas?



Regulating Leafblowers on the Vineyard

<https://vineyardconservation.org/education-advocacy/environmental-policy/leaf-blower-regulations>



Leaf Blower regulations are in effect.

Beginning Fall 2025, the following restrictions apply to leaf blower use in the towns of West Tisbury, Tisbury, Oak Bluffs, and Edgartown for both homeowners and commercial operators, and in Chilmark for commercial operators only.

Gas-powered leaf blowers **CANNOT** be used:

SUMMER: June 1st - October 15th

WINTER: January 15th - March 15th

Gas-powered and Electric leaf blowers may only be used during the following times:

- Mon through Fri: 8:00am–5:00pm
- Sat: 10:00am-5:00pm (8am-5pm in Edg.)
- Sun & Federal Holidays:
 - *WT & OB - No gas or electric leaf blower use*
 - *Tisbury: No gas leaf blower use*
 - *Edgartown & Chilmark: No gas or electric leaf blower use by commercial operators*
- No more than 2 leaf blowers may be used simultaneously on the same property.

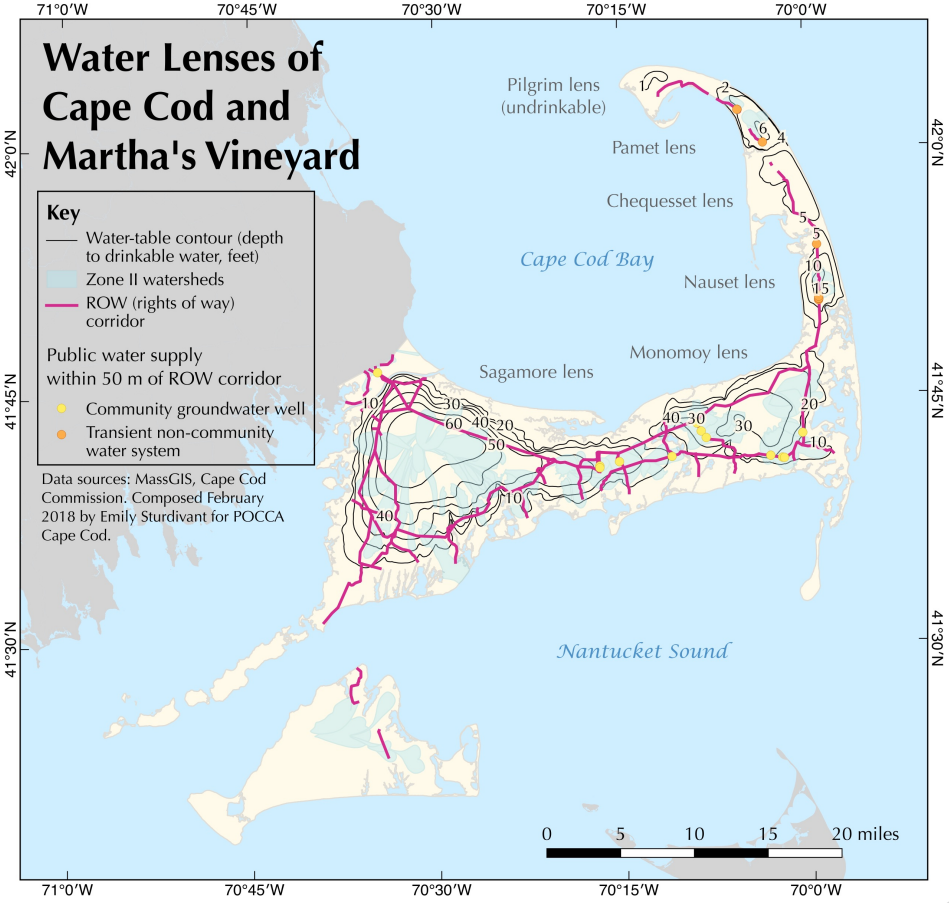
Restrictions only apply to gas-powered leaf blowers in VH

Restrictions only apply to commercial operators in Chilmark



Remember: Gas-powered leaf blowers are ***completely banned*** starting Spring 2028. For tips and resources on transitioning to electric, scan QR code on this card.

Regulating Pesticides & Nutrients



EASTHAM TOWN MEETING: MAY 4, 2026

Protect Our Waters

Fertilizer Reduction HRP

Article 6B

Water is what brings people to **Eastham** — and what makes us want to stay. Our beautiful beaches, our bay, and our ponds are not just scenery; they are our identity, our economy, and our home. They are worth protecting and we have a chance to do that.

This Home Rule Petition (HRP) is for the reduction of synthetic Fertilizer use in Eastham. Organic OMRI fertilizers would still be allowed.

THE PROBLEM: FERTILIZERS ARE BRINGING HARM TO OUR WATERS

Beneath Eastham lies a single, precious body of fresh water — the aquifer. This is the **only source of drinking water for every home**. There is no backup. There is no alternative. Once contaminated, an aquifer can take decades to recover. The choices made on every lawn affect our fresh, salt and drinkable waters.

Fertilizer is food for plants. There are many types of food to feed your lawns and gardens. Unfortunately, some are harmful, and that is why this petition was created. **We are seeing polluted waters from products we choose to use on our land - and we can physically protect waters by stopping the assault.**

Fertilizer consists of Nitrogen, Potassium and Phosphorus. When fertilizer is applied to land and is not fully absorbed by vegetation, the excess runs-off and runs through Cape Cod's sandy soil. Sand provides zero natural filtration. There is nothing to stop those products from getting to our groundwater. **Scientists estimate fertilizer nutrients travel more than one foot per day**, seeping through our soil and heading toward our shared groundwater, potentially reaching the aquifer within a couple of weeks.

Excess Nitrogen isn't healthy for ponds or oceans. It feeds algae, triggering rapid growth that depletes oxygen and blocks sunlight, bringing harm to fish. High Nitrogen levels can fuel cyanobacteria in ponds, which can be fatal to fish, harmful to pets, people, and all creatures who drink from the pond.

Fertilizer is the second highest Nitrogen pollutant in waters (first is septic system seepage). The amount of TMDL — Total Maximum Daily Load — matters. We have **fertilizer choices**. Man-made synthetic and animal compost are both high in Nitrogen. The point is to lessen the amount of the Nitrogen load. Please **choose Leaf compost to feed your property**. Add an inch to lawns and gardens in the Spring and Fall - because it has the least amount of Nitrogen loading.

Water contamination is not a future problem. It is happening now.

#2
Fertilizer is the second highest Nitrogen pollutant in water

0
natural filtration layers in our sand

1 ft
per day = the rate products travel

25'
Average depth to our aquifer in Eastham

\$0
Fertilizer Reduction Costs the town and taxpayers nothing

THE VOTE: WHAT YOU ARE BEING ASKED TO VOTE ON

On **May 4, 2026**, Eastham residents will vote on a **Home Rule Petition (HRP)**, to reduce the application of synthetic fertilizer in Truro. A Home Rule Petition is a formal request to the Massachusetts State Legislature to restore a right the State removed in 2014 — the right for a town to regulate fertilizer. If the HRP passes by simple majority vote, it becomes a Bill to be signed by the governor within 2 years to become law.

Enforcement you ask? We won't know exactly who will be in charge until the right to regulate fertilizer use is restored to Eastham - maybe the Health Dept., since this is all about our health, or maybe the Conservation Dept., since its harmful to waters? But this HRP is not about punishment; it's about choosing, as a community, what we value and what we'll protect.

In the meantime, we all can **volunteer to not use synthetic fertilizers on our land to help our waters** — why wait for enforcement? We know what the right thing to do is, so let's do the right thing!

The more towns who support this, the better chance it will be successful in the MA State House

This is not a new idea. The Select Board of Orleans wrote this petition following Nantucket's lead. Both towns acted to protect their waters and their beloved shellfish. Orleans residents voted YES in October 2022. Wellfleet residents voted yes in October 2025. A Fertilizer Reduction HRP is on the Truro Town Meeting Warrant this year, as well. Eastham can join this movement!

Why wait for enforcement? We know what the right thing to do for the future, so let's do the right thing

A YES Vote Means	What YOU can do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Helping to reduce the TMDL's = Total Maximum Daily Load of nitrogen reaching Truro's waters. ✓ Saving money — you don't need synthetic fertilizer to grow lawns and gardens. ✓ Join Nantucket, Orleans, and Wellfleet in reducing high nitrogen fertilizer use to help protect surrounding waters. ✓ Costs the town and taxpayers nothing \$0 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top-dress ground covers and gardens with one inch of LEAF compost each Spring and Fall. Animal compost is high in Nitrogen, so use it sparingly. • Plant native vegetation — they thrive without products. Also, Native plants feed native pollinators! • Ask your lawn service to eliminate synthetic fertilizers and pesticides to help ensure a healthier future. • Share this hand-out with your friends and neighbors and help support Fertilizer Reduction over time.

YOUR QUESTIONS, ANSWERED

<p>Can I still grow fruits and vegetables?</p> <p>Absolutely — and we encourage it — Growing your own food is wonderful. Low-nitrogen organic fertilizers for food gardens are available at all local garden stores and are fully permitted.</p>	<p>Can I still use compost?</p> <p>Yes. Organic compost is explicitly excluded from the definition of "fertilizer" under Massachusetts General Law (Chapter 128, Section 64). Compost, leaf mulch, and OMRI-listed natural organic fertilizers remain fully allowed.</p>	<p>How does this affect local businesses?</p> <p>Businesses may still sell any fertilizer products they choose. The petition only restricts application of fertilizer — not sales. No one is wanting businesses to fail in any way because of this — instead, ride the wave of the future and offer organic products! The Truro Select Board is committed to supporting businesses through this transition to help guide residents toward safe, effective alternatives.</p>
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Cape Cod's aquifer is designated by the EPA as a sole-source aquifer — fed only by precipitation — no alternative water supply exists.

— Visit [Beyond Pesticides](https://www.beyondpesticides.org/resources/lawns-and-landscapes/tools-for-change/fcwlm) for facts, property care and more tips:

<https://www.beyondpesticides.org/resources/lawns-and-landscapes/tools-for-change/fcwlm>

VOTE
May 4, 2026

Eastham Town Meeting
Fertilizer Reduction
Home Rule Petition

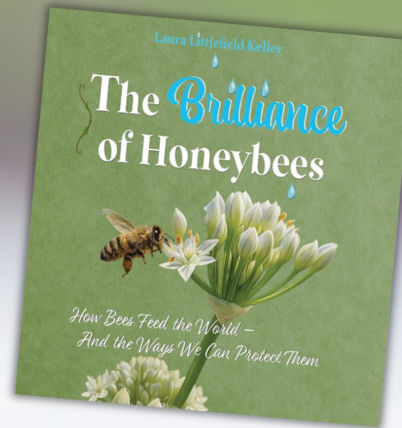


- *Creative Land Design
- *Custom Stone Work
- *Organic Land Care
- *Native Plantings

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A story about the smallest workers with the mightiest role in feeding the world.

Laura Kelley
774.353.6511



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Steps for Success

- Collaborate with like-minded individuals to select an area for intervention
- Research and document of existing practices/concerns and needed changes
- Identify an existing model policy or best practice, or develop a novel solution
- Identify risks of inaction, benefits of adoption, and common concerns
- Identify likely supporters, allies, and opposition
- Create engagement opportunities
- Work with citizens, officials, and impacted stakeholders to inform policy development and review
 - Organize public forums / support public hearings
 - Provide high-quality, factual information throughout process
- Have Select Board, Town Committee, or trusted organization bring article to Town Meeting (or bring municipal policy change forward)
 - Provide handouts with key messages
 - Line up supportive speakers and citizens