



TOWN OF BOXFORD

Office of the Board of Selectmen
7A Spofford Road
Boxford, MA 01921

www.town.boxford.ma.us

Tel: (978) 887-6000 Ext. 502

Fax: (978) 887-5361

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact:

Alan Benson
Boxford Town Administrator
978-887-6000 x502
abenson@town.boxford.ma.us

BOXFORD CONDEMNS MASS HIGHWAY SALT SHED

Boxford, MA, December 3, 2008 - The Boxford Board of Health has formally declared the Mass Highway Salt Shed and its operations on Topsfield Road in Boxford a threat to public health and ordered Mass Highway to cease all activity immediately. At 9:30 a.m. this morning, the Town posted signs at the site and partially restricted access to the facility off the town's right of way. Simultaneously today, the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Health filed a lawsuit against Mass Highway seeking permanent closure of the facility.

Salt contamination of the groundwater emanating from the Mass Highway Salt Shed and its operations and the resulting polluting of individual homeowners' drinking water wells have been an ongoing health issue in Boxford for many years. Boxford does not have a municipal water system and its residents are completely dependent upon their own private wells for clean fresh drinking water. "It makes no sense that Mass Highway maintains a contaminating salt shed in the only town on Route 95 completely dependent upon private wells," said Boxford Board of Selectman Chair Charles Costello. "The facility is completely surrounded by dozens of private wells, many of which are highly salt contaminated."

MORE

Boxford officials contend upwards of thirty private drinking water wells in the town have been polluted by Mass Highway's road salt operations. "Mass Highway has spent hundred of thousands of dollars attempting to drill replacement wells, to buy residents new dishwashers, washing machines, hot water heaters to replace those appliances corroded by the extreme levels of salt contamination," said Costello. "Even some of the replacement wells are now contaminated. Mass Highway must continue its efforts to repair the damage it has done, but Mass Highway must also remove the ongoing source of contamination. This salt shed must be closed."

Over the years, Boxford officials and the local legislative delegation attempted to work with the Romney Administration and now the Patrick Administration to close the salt shed and bring about a permanent solution to the contamination to no avail. Recent calls for action have gone unanswered by administration officials. "Mass Highway's refusal to close or move this polluting facility is outrageous. Large, non-polluting facilities exist nearby: one five miles to the north, one five miles to the south. In addition, a 14-acre state owned property less than two miles away, situated directly on I-95, isolated from any private drinking water wells, is ironically dismissed by Mass Highway for 'environmental reasons'" claimed Costello. "The Board of Health ordered the facility to cease operations and Boxford filed these lawsuits out of frustration and anger at the failure of Mass Highway to effectively address this situation. We will continue our efforts until this facility is permanently closed and every homeowner's contamination has been remediated."

END