



Paul R. LePage, Governor

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Drinking Water Program

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February 14, 2014

Patrick Venne
Berwick Town Manager
11 Sullivan Street
Berwick, ME 03901

Subject: Drinking Water Concerns Related to Proposed Public Boat Launch

Dear Mr. Venne:

The purpose of this letter is to express concerns on the part of the Maine CDC Drinking Water Program (DWP) with respect to the proposed boat launch on the Salmon Falls River in Berwick, Maine. The primary mission of the DWP is to help public water systems (PWS's) comply with the federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) and State regulations, which includes working with systems to protect drinking water sources. Recreational use of a public water supply increases the risk of contaminants such as pathogens in the water, particularly when the use is in close proximity to the water intake. For this reason, many of the surface water supplies in Maine have use restrictions in place. I would be pleased to offer you more detailed information on the risks if this would be helpful.

As you know, the Berwick Water Department draws water directly from the Salmon Falls River at a surface water intake located approximately 1000 feet upstream from the proposed boat launch location. It is also noteworthy that the surface water intake for the Somersworth, New Hampshire PWS is less than 500 feet downstream from the proposed launch. Because activities associated with the use of a public access boat launch have the potential to create adverse impacts to water quality in the River, and therefore may impact the public water supplies, we would like the Town to consider the following prior to granting approval for the proposed project:

1. If possible, it would be preferable to choose a location for the proposed launch at a greater distance from the Berwick intake, ideally downstream from the Somersworth intake. We hope the Town will assess the feasibility of constructing the proposed launch at a better location to avoid impacts to the PWS intakes.
2. If the currently proposed location is chosen as the only feasible site for the launch, the DWP recommends restricting use of the launch to non-motorized watercraft. If it is necessary to launch motorized craft for emergency (fire and rescue) purposes, we ask that training exercises occur downstream of both intakes.
3. The DWP also recommends that a zone of "no bodily contact" and "no mooring" be established to prohibit swimming, mooring and all other activities that may involve direct contact with the water. A zone of 1500 feet radius has been proposed by the Maine Rural Water Association (MRWA) and we feel this is reasonable.
4. During construction, all applicable measures should be taken to minimize erosion and potential runoff of sediment into the water body. All spill prevention control and countermeasure (SPCC) methods should also be employed to prevent accidental leakage of oil or other substances into the River during the construction process. Long-term stormwater management (Low Impact Development techniques, for example) on-site will help protect water quality in the River.
5. The DWP also recommends active enforcement of any drinking water protection restrictions.

I would like to stress the importance of Item 1 in that we strongly recommend that an alternate location be considered for the proposed launch. Moving the launch to a location downstream from both intakes would greatly reduce the potential for accidental contamination of the public drinking water supplies.

Thank you for your attention on this matter. Please feel free to contact me to discuss this letter or other aspects of managing and protecting your public water supply source.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael D. Abbott", with a horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Michael D. Abbott, P.E., C.G.
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Cc: Chris Weismann, Berwick Water Department
Susan Breau, Maine Rural Water Association
Ian Rohrbacher, Somersworth Water Department
Pierce Rigrod, New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services