

ARTICLE 6:

ARTICLE 6: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum of money to conduct Cyanobacteria sampling of various ponds, including all incidental and related expenses, or take any other action relative thereto.

MARINE AND ENVIRONMENTAL

RECOMMENDATION: Approval \$17,500 (12-0-0) Unanimous

The Advisory & Finance Committee recommends Town Meeting approve Article 6. This article will provide funding for the Department of Marine and Environmental Affairs and the Health Department to sample public and private waterbodies for toxins that are potential health risks. This project would be funded from the Environmental Affairs Fund.



Town of Plymouth, Massachusetts
Department of Marine and Environmental Affairs
26 Court Street, Plymouth, MA 02360 | 508-747-1620



MEMO

To: Melissa Arrighi, Town Manager
From: David Gould, Director of Marine and Environmental Affairs
Re: Cyanobacteria Sampling/EA Fund
Date: August 13, 2020

DMEA respectfully requests the use of \$17,500 from the Environmental Affairs Fund for use in sampling lakes and ponds for water quality issues including cyanobacteria blooms. Cyanobacteria blooms represent a public health risk during the summer months and often require repeated sampling tests.

The average cost of a cyanobacteria sample/lab results is \$150. The first sample would establish the presence of a bloom and/or the presence of toxic microcystin colonies and at least two subsequent samples would need to be negative tests (and lack of a visual bloom) before the local Department of Public Health and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health would re-open a pond to swimming. At a minimum, this would be \$450 per pond under the best-case scenario. Longer blooms would require more weekly sampling and more corresponding sampling costs.

The proposed funding would allow both DMEA and Public Health to sample both public and private waterbodies to ensure that public health is being protected. Neither department currently has the necessary funds to cover the increasing frequency and costs of cyanobacteria sampling for lakes and ponds in town.

Among the ponds that have experienced cyanobacteria blooms over the last several years are:

Bartlett Pond
Great Herring Pond
Billington Sea
Savery Pond
Boot Pond
Cooks Pond
Little Long Pond
Ezekiel Pond
Halfway Pond
White Island Pond