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MEDIA ADVISORY

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Contact: Micaelah Morrill
(617) 722.1570

(BOSTON) – On Wednesday August 12th in North Eastham, Senator Robert O’Leary (D-Barnstable) and Representative Sarah Peake (D-Provincetown) hosted a public informational session about herbicidal spraying around power lines. Following that forum Senator O’Leary, Representative Peake and Representative Cleon Turner (D-Brewster) have submitted a letter to Nstar asking that they halt all planned spraying in the areas of Wellfleet, Orleans and Eastham for at least thirty days so that constituents and town officials can determine the best course of action to take regarding Nstar’s vegetation management plan.

“This is an issue of great concern to a number of my constituents and I want to make sure there is adequate time for their voices to be heard,” said Senator O’Leary.

At Wednesday’s forum, a panel consisting of representatives from Nstar and the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR), along with pesticide specialists and arborists were available to discuss different methods of maintaining Nstar’s right-of-ways which must be cleared on a regular basis to comply with federal safety regulations. It was moderated by Patrick Cassidy from the Cape Cod Times and allowed the public to pose questions to the panel about concerns they had regarding the practice of spraying herbicides to manage right-of-way growth. Prior to the hearing, a number of people, including the Town of Eastham, had expressed concerns about the environmental and health impacts of herbicidal spraying on areas of the Cape, especially those areas close to private wells and farmland.

“The Eastham Board of Selectmen and the Town Administrator need time to thoughtfully and deliberatively weigh all of their options, work with the many concerned citizens and develop a course of action. Two days is not enough time to do this, thirty days should be more helpful,” said Rep. Peake.

"It is quite apparent that citizens of the Cape are concerned about possible threats to their health and want to and should have a say in what is done, environmentally, in their communities," said Rep. Turner.

Nstar had planned to begin its vegetation management in Eastham on Monday August 17th; however due to public response from the forum they have pushed that date back. Because of this decision, an advertisement scheduled to be printed over the weekend in the Cape Cod Times will not accurately reflect the scheduled spraying times in Eastham.

The window of time allowed by MDAR that Nstar can spray ends October 16th of this year and Nstar had originally been planning an October 9th deadline for the project to be completed. The herbicides that Nstar has planned to use were part of a yearly operational plan already approved by the MDAR. A copy of the letter requesting Nstar to wait thirty days before spraying was also sent to Commissioner Soares of MDAR who was in attendance at Wednesday nights' forum in Eastham.

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