



October 27, 2016

Lynne Jennings
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – Region 1
5 Post Office Square, Suite 100
Boston, MA 02109-3912

Re: Joint Base Cape Cod Modification to Administrative Orders

Dear Ms. Jennings:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed amendments to the Administrative Orders (AO) impacting range operations at Joint Base Cape Cod. Founded in 1968, APCC is the leading regional non-profit environmental advocacy and education organization on Cape Cod. Representing more than 5,000 members, APCC's mission is to promote policies and programs that foster the preservation of the Cape's natural resources. APCC focuses its efforts on the protection of groundwater, surface water, and wetland resources, preservation of open space, the promotion of responsible, planned growth and the achievement of an environmental ethic.

The northern 15,000 acres of Joint Base Cape Cod rest upon the single largest clean water reserve on Cape Cod. The Sagamore lens of the Cape's EPA designated sole source aquifer is centered here. Knowing everything that we now know, smart planning and protection strategies would never permit the erection of military firing ranges in such close proximity to this valuable drinking water supply. An Act Relative to the Environmental Protection of Massachusetts Military Reservation (now Joint Base Cape Cod), ch. 47 of the Acts of 2002 (hereinafter the Act), recognized the reality of an established military base collocated with a drinking water supply (Cape Cod's Quabbin Reservoir). That Act is the foundation for EPA's proposed amendments to the AO. APCC is not opposed to the military using the established ranges for environmentally responsible training. However, the proposed amendments fail to insure that the military training is consistent with both the Act and the Clean Water Act. The conditions established by the EPA are both inadequate, and more importantly, not currently met by the state.

The proposed amendments rely on the environmental management commission (EMC) established under the Act to oversee compliance and monitoring of the AO. Here are the problems with that reliance:

1. Section 8 of the Act requires the EMC to hire an environmental officer with specific duties and responsibilities. That position has been vacant for nearly a year and half. The Act infers a fulltime presence at Joint Base Cape Cod. "The environmental officer shall have an office located within the environmental

readiness center or such other location on the MMR as may be appropriate to carry out his duties.” The acting person is reportedly working from Lakeville, MA and has a myriad of other environmental responsibilities.

2. Oversight of the ranges requires that the environmental officer is on the ranges when the military is training. Section 8 of the Act requires a presence during training evolutions to “monitor, oversee, evaluate and report” on environmental compliance. This does not appear to be the current practice.
3. One of the conditions is for the base to comply with all conditions established by the EMC. It must be noted that all of those conditions were established when there was an environmental officer in residence.
4. One of the proposed conditions is that the state allocate the funds necessary to carry out maintenance and monitoring. The failure of the state to adequately staff the oversight and monitoring with an environmental officer means that this condition is not satisfied from the start.
5. According to published minutes, the EMC has met once since 2014 in June of this year. They do have a second meeting scheduled next week.
6. The EMC is advised by the Community Advisory Council (CAC). According to published minutes, since November of 2014 the CAC has also only managed to meet with a quorum twice, both times in 2016.
7. Neither the EMC nor the CAC met in 2015. This is likely due to the environmental officer vacancy and further demonstrates the need to fill this position.

These vacancies and infrequent meetings are not part of a successful formula for oversight and monitoring of the most important resource on the base—drinking water. APCC recognizes that when training or construction is not actively occurring the environmental officer’s presence may not be required at JBCC. However, during training and construction activities the environmental officer is essential to water quality protection.

Additionally, the amendments do nothing to incorporate environmental stewardship into the mission of Camp Edwards or Joint Base Cape. There is no greater homeland security mission for Joint Base Cape Cod than protection of the drinking water. The commanding officer of Camp Edwards should be specifically tasked with the mission of protecting the water supply and part of his or her officer evaluation should include protection of the water supply. Moreover, failure to carry out the terms and conditions of the AO should provide a basis for being relieved of command.

In essence, the amendments are not objectionable if the tools for monitoring and early intervention are in place. As noted herein the tools are not in place.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Edward DeWitt', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Edward DeWitt
Executive Director