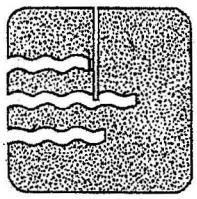

BARNES AQUIFER PROTECTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

c/o Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 60 Congress Street, Springfield, MA 01104-3419

June 28, 2010

David J. Narkewicz
Councilor At-Large
City Council President
31 South Park Terrace
Northampton, MA 01060

Reference: Proposed Ordinance Amendment Banning Landfills over Aquifer

Dear Councilor Narkewicz:

On behalf of the Barnes Aquifer Protection Advisory Committee (BAPAC), please accept our comments in support of the proposed ordinance amendment banning landfills, the expansion of existing landfill facilities, and/or new landfill cells in all Water Supply Protection Districts in Northampton. BAPAC is composed of representatives from the four jurisdictions with permitted withdrawals from the Barnes Aquifer. The committee was created in 1989 to address developments of regional impact that are proposed within the aquifer to ensure their drinking water resources remain safe and abundant for the more than 60,000 people served by it.

While recognizing advances in landfill engineering and technology are safer than those used on the original landfill, BAPAC notes that across the country, landfill liners have failed, polluting surface and groundwater sources. While the landfill may have an extended lifetime of 30 years with the new cell, the aquifer represents a critical water source for *all* future generations that must be protected.

BAPAC has reviewed the Water Quality Monitoring Reports by Brown and Caldwell. The data in these reports clearly indicates that leachate is escaping from the landfill based on the following observations documented in these reports:

1. Monitoring well MW-B is located within a groundwater discharge area immediately down gradient of the landfill.

2. Sample reports note a "strong organic" odor (leachate) from samples collected from MW-B. (Brown and Caldwell November 2009 Water Quality Monitoring, Northampton Sanitary Landfill, Northampton, MA 1/7/2010)

3. The area of thick iron flocculate in the wetland adjacent to well MW-B is expanding.

"There has been some change in the extent of the staining since observations were initiated in 2001; an increase in the amount of stained substrate is apparent. No quantification of this increase has been made."

(2009 Hannum Brook Evaluation Update Northampton Regional Sanitary Landfill, Northampton MA, Oct 2009)

4. Both iron and manganese concentrations are increasing at MW-B. The increase in iron concentrations over time at MW-B is troubling as it shows that leakage of leachate from the landfill is increasing.

Given the evidence stated above, it is clear that the landfill is impacting groundwater, and will continue to do so for many years to come. The long-term environmental and health impacts simply are not known nor can be forecasted at this time. However, we are able to recognize the changes that are occurring within the aquifer today. BAPAC believes the long-term risk to the Barnes Aquifer far outweighs the short-term benefits of expanding this regional landfill. For these reasons, we support the proposed amendment banning landfills, the expansion of existing landfill facilities, and/or new landfill cells in all Water Supply Protection Districts in Northampton.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Charles Darling, Chair

cc: Dan Hall, DEP-BSW
Jo-Anne Bessett, Water Not Waste
Easthampton Department of Public Works
Northampton Department of Public Works
Mayor Tautznik, City of Easthampton
Easthampton City Council