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**For More Information:**

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## **Toxic Map of Massachusetts Reveals Threats to Public Health**

Residents Highlight Toxic Threat from Northampton Landfill and Urge City to Abandon Expansion

**Northampton-** Today, Toxics Action Center, a non-profit organization that helps residents prevent and clean up sources of toxic pollution in their communities, released *Toxics in Massachusetts: A Town-By-Town Profile*. This report and accompanying maps highlight Massachusetts's toxic legacy and the associated potential health and environmental hazards.

“Massachusetts citizens are often left in the dark when it comes to toxic threats in their communities. This map reveals a legacy of pollution in the state that will surprise most residents,” said Megan Jenny, Western Massachusetts community organizer for Toxics Action Center. “For citizens who are looking for answers, our report is a one-stop source of information.”

*Toxics in Massachusetts: A Town-By-Town Profile* and accompanying map show that Massachusetts has 36 Superfund hazardous waste sites on the National Priorities List, an additional 1900 tier-classified toxic waste sites identified by the state, 1,103 hazardous waste generators, 247 partially capped or uncapped landfills, 264 closed landfills, and 7 solid waste incinerators.

“This report and the maps included in the report are a tool to inform Massachusetts residents about potential environmental health threats in their communities,” said Dr. David Ozonoff, Professor of Environmental Health at Boston University School of Public Health and Director of the BU Superfund Research Program. “The information in this report is freely available to all Massachusetts residents but it isn’t always accessible. Toxics Action Center has made an important contribution.”

The report makes a number of broad policy recommendations for state agencies to take action and protect public health; these actions include phasing out persistent toxic chemicals and replacing them with safer alternatives, assuring appropriate cleanup of hazardous waste through increased funding and shorter timelines for cleanups, creating a “zero-waste” plan that maximizes waste reduction across the state, advancing renewable energy technologies, reducing pesticide exposures, and protecting water quality. Nationally, more than 80,000 chemicals are used in manufacturing and many have not been tested for human health effects. In addition, environmental toxins are increasingly linked to adverse health effects such as endocrine disruption, reproductive problems, cancer, and neurodevelopmental disorders.

In Massachusetts, residents are exposed everyday to toxic chemicals resulting from dangerous trash disposal practices. The Environmental Protection Agency says that all landfills will eventually leak, and what they leak is toxic and can threaten drinking water resources. Incineration is no better, redistributing cancer-causing chemicals like lead, mercury and dioxin into the air that we breathe and creating concentrated toxic ash that must be landfilled. In Northampton, residents are well aware of the threat that landfills can pose to public health and the environment. Despite a policy against siting landfills over aquifers, two years ago the Department

of Environmental Protection granted a first-ever waiver to the City of Northampton, allowing it to expand its landfill over a Zone II aquifer. The Zone II refers to the recharge zone of the Barnes Aquifer, a drinking water source for more than 60,000 Western Massachusetts residents. Since then, a majority of Northampton residents voted against the landfill expansion in a non-binding referendum last fall, and the City Council has yet to take action in a decision on the expansion.

“Our drinking water should come first,” said Mimi Odgers, the leader of a local citizens group called Water Not Waste that formed to oppose the landfill expansion and promote Zero Waste solutions to extend the life of the landfill and decrease waste. “We urge the City Council to permanently abandon the landfill expansion proposal and put Northampton on a path towards Zero Waste.”

Unfortunately, Northampton is not alone. There are 26 active landfills across the state of Massachusetts and 7 incinerators that release toxic chemicals into the air and pollute water and soil. Right now the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection is drafting their Solid Waste Master Plan for the next decade, the blueprint for how the state will manage its trash. Odgers and Jenny urged the state to focus on Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and to set a goal of Zero Waste for Massachusetts instead of expanding the burying and burning of garbage.

The report *Toxics in Massachusetts: A Town-By-Town Profile* and accompanying maps was developed with support from the Boston University Superfund Research Program Outreach Core funded by the National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences, using information from the US Environmental Protection Agency, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and the MassGIS. The maps and report are available for viewing online at [www.toxicsaction.org](http://www.toxicsaction.org).

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## Available

### for Comment:

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Resident impacted by Northampton regional landfill

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### Visuals:

A large map of all toxic sites in Massachusetts will be available in Toxics Action Center's office for newspaper photographers and television cameras. Single graphic images of the maps are also available for reprinting.

Email Megan Jenny at [mjenny@toxicsaction.org](mailto:mjenny@toxicsaction.org) or call 860-233-7623 to receive a copy of the report by email. The report will also be posted at [www.toxicsaction.org](http://www.toxicsaction.org) by 10 a.m. EST.