



# TOWN OF ORLEANS

19 School Road Orleans, MA 02653-3699

Phone (508) 240-3700

<http://www.town.orleans.ma.us>

SELECTBOARD

TOWN  
MANAGER

October 24, 2025

Joint Committee on Environmental and Natural Resources  
24 Beacon Street  
State House Room 215  
Boston, MA 02133

Re: Support for Orleans Home Rule Petition for Pesticide Reduction Bylaw

Dear Chair Rausch, Chair Barber, and Joint Committee Members:

On behalf of the Orleans Select Board, we are writing in strong support for the proposed legislation for a Pesticide Reduction Bylaw in the Town of Orleans. Not only unanimously favored by the Orleans Select Board, this initiative was voted by residents at the October 16, 2023 Annual Town Meeting and passed by a 68% favorable vote. This important bylaw would represent an evidence based step toward protecting the health of residents, pets, wildlife, and the ecosystems upon which the communities of Cape Cod depend on.

Pesticides are designed to kill living organisms, and mounting scientific evidence demonstrates their far reaching impacts on human health and the environment. Exposure to toxic pesticides has been associated with cancer, asthma, neurological and developmental disorders, reproductive harm, and endocrine disruption. Furthermore, pesticide runoff contaminates waterways and estuaries, threatening Orleans' fragile coastal ecosystems and water quality. By focusing on prevention, soil health, and less toxic alternatives, Orleans will not only reduce exposure to harmful chemicals but also promote biodiversity and protect pollinators vital to our food systems and natural landscapes.

Importantly, this Act maintains flexibility through exemptions for public health emergencies and ecological restoration, ensuring that Orleans can respond effectively to urgent or specialized circumstances while maintaining its commitment to public and environmental safety.

Residents of Orleans, like those of many towns across Massachusetts, are seeking the legal authority to act responsibly and locally in the face of growing environmental and public health concerns. The passing of this Act will affirm Massachusetts' long-standing leadership in environmental stewardship, community health, and home rule governance.

We urge you to approve this important measure and allow the Town of Orleans to adopt and implement its pesticide reduction bylaw. Please help us preserve Orleans and protect the health of its residents by voting favorably and supporting this Bill. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Kevin F. Galligan  
Select Board Chair

  
Kimberly Newman  
Town Manager



# TOWN OF ORLEANS

19 SCHOOL ROAD ORLEANS MASSACHUSETTS 02653-3699  
Telephone (508) 240-3700 – Fax (508) 240-3703  
<http://www.town.orleans.ma.us>

SELECT BOARD  
TOWN  
ADMINISTRATOR

April 10, 2024

To: Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Re: H.4481 An Act authorizing the town of Orleans to adopt a pesticide reduction bylaw

Dear Chairs Cahill, Rausch, and Committee Members,

The Orleans Select Board voted unanimously to bring the Home Rule Petition to Reduce Pesticides to Town Meeting on October 16, 2023 which passed by a 68% favorable vote.

Our natural environment is what brings people to Orleans and makes us want to stay in this special place. Now and in the future, it is our most valuable environmental resource and economic asset. It directly affects every resident, property owner, visitor, and business in our town. Orleans.

The purpose of this Bill is to allow the Town of Orleans to reduce toxic pesticide use to protect the public from the hazards of pesticides, promote a healthy environment for all and safeguard our economy. This is not a ban of all pesticides but a reduction of the most harmful.

Toxic chemicals from pesticides seep into the soil and groundwater, also become airborne, and can be found thousands of feet from the application site. They contaminate the air we breathe, the waters we recreate in, the aquifer from which we drink, and the soils in which we grow food for humans, animals and wildlife. People have the right not to be exposed to pesticides from other's properties.

Many studies associate pesticides with serious negative health effects including leukemia, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma: cancers of the brain, breast, prostate, testes and ovaries: heart disease, stroke, diabetes, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, ADHD, autism and other autoimmune diseases, as well as birth defects and reproductive harm.

Butterflies, bees and insects are the 'building blocks of the food chain' and their numbers are declining rapidly, up to 2% per year. They pollinate 75-80% of crops and wild plants. They keep our soils healthy and are the major food source for our birds and amphibians. Their importance in the environment cannot be understated.

Climate change is one critical example where scientific evidence indicates that pesticides contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emission, and create a vicious cycle of pollution and dependency.

All are unintended consequences but unfortunately, all are deadly real. We see locally and globally how polluted environments have a drastic and negative impact on the health of communities and their economies.

Times are continuing to change, and attitudes towards the use of products that cause harm to our people, environment, waters, wildlife and economy, are not acceptable. Voters are asking for our leadership and support, and over 3,800 supporters have already signed petitions of support.

Please help us preserve Orleans - this special place we love - by voting favorably and supporting this Bill.

Thank You,



Michael Herman  
Orleans Select Board, Chair

This initiative has also been supported by:

Association to Preserve Cape Cod (APCC)  
Barnstable County Assembly of Delegates  
Barnstable County Commissioners  
Cape Cod Commission  
Orleans Agricultural Advisory Council  
Orleans Board of Health  
Orleans Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners  
Orleans Conservation Commission  
Orleans Conservation Trust (OCT)  
Orleans Energy and Climate Action Committee  
Orleans Farmers' Market  
Orleans Open Space Committee  
Orleans Pond Coalition (OPC)  
Orleans Shellfish and Waterways Committee  
Friends of Crystal Lake  
Protect Our Cape Cod Aquifer (POCCA)  
Provincetown Farmers' Market  
Sierra Club (MA)  
Sustainable Cape  
Truro Farmers' Market



Pesticide Home Rule Petition 2023 |  
Orleans, MA  
[www.town.orleans.ma.us](https://www.town.orleans.ma.us)

For updated information, please visit:

<https://www.town.orleans.ma.us/1335/Pesticide-Home-Rule-Petition-2023>

# Protect our People, Waters and Environment

## Article 24: Pesticide Reduction Home Rule Petition

### Fall Town Meeting October 16, 2023

Our natural environment is what brings people here and makes us want to stay in this special place. Now and in the future it is our most valuable environmental resource and economic asset. It directly affects every resident, property owner, visitor, and business in Orleans.

The purpose of this Home Rule Petition is to reduce toxic pesticide use in the Town of Orleans in order to protect the public from the hazards of pesticides, promote a healthy environment for all and safeguard our economy. This is not a ban of all pesticides but a reduction of the most harmful.

Toxic chemicals from pesticides seep into the soil and groundwater, also become airborne, and can be found thousands of feet from the application site. They contaminate the air we breathe, the waters we recreate in, the aquifer from which we drink, and the soils in which we grow food for humans, animals and wildlife. People have the right not to be exposed to pesticides from other's properties.

Many studies associate pesticides with serious negative health effects including leukemia, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma: cancers of the brain, breast, prostate, testes and ovaries: heart disease, stroke, diabetes, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, ADHD, autism and other autoimmune diseases, as well as birth defects and reproductive harm.

Butterflies, bees and insects are the 'building blocks of the food chain' and their numbers are declining rapidly, up to 2% per year. They pollinate 75-80% of crops and wild plants. They keep our soils healthy and are the major food source for our birds and amphibians. Their importance in the environment cannot be understated.

Climate change is one critical example where scientific evidence indicates that pesticides contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emission, and create a vicious cycle of pollution and dependency.

All are unintended consequences but unfortunately, all are deadly real. We see locally and globally how polluted environments have a drastic and negative impact on the health of communities and their economies. Individually we can have an immediate impact on protecting our family, friends and environments by volunteering to change our behavior by using safe, effective products, and practices, and educating our neighbors and ourselves in their use. The solution is free and costs the town and taxpayers nothing.

Help preserve this special place we love by supporting this Home Rule Petition at Fall Town Meeting, so we can send a strong message to our State Legislature.

For updated information, please visit:

<https://www.town.orleans.ma.us/1335/Pesticide-Home-Rule-Petition-2023>



Pesticide Home Rule Petition 2023 |  
Orleans, MA  
[www.town.orleans.ma.us](http://www.town.orleans.ma.us)

## Support:

Association to Preserve Cape Cod (APCC)  
Barnstable County Assembly of Delegates  
Barnstable County Commissioners  
Cape Cod Commission  
Orleans Agricultural Advisory Council  
Orleans Board of Health  
Orleans Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners  
Orleans Conservation Commission  
Orleans Conservation Trust (OCT)  
Orleans Energy and Climate Action Committee  
Orleans Farmers' Market  
Orleans Open Space Committee  
Orleans Pond Coalition (OPC)  
Orleans Shellfish and Waterways Committee  
Friends of Crystal Lake  
Protect Our Cape Cod Aquifer (POCCA)  
Provincetown Farmers' Market  
Sierra Club (MA)  
Sustainable Cape  
Truro Farmers' Market

Join supporters  
3,929+  
signatures so far!



Protect our People and our Environment



## Pesticide Reduction Initiative

“We can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.”

-Albert Einstein



Pesticide Reduction Initiative 2023/24

**Why are we doing this and asking for your support?**

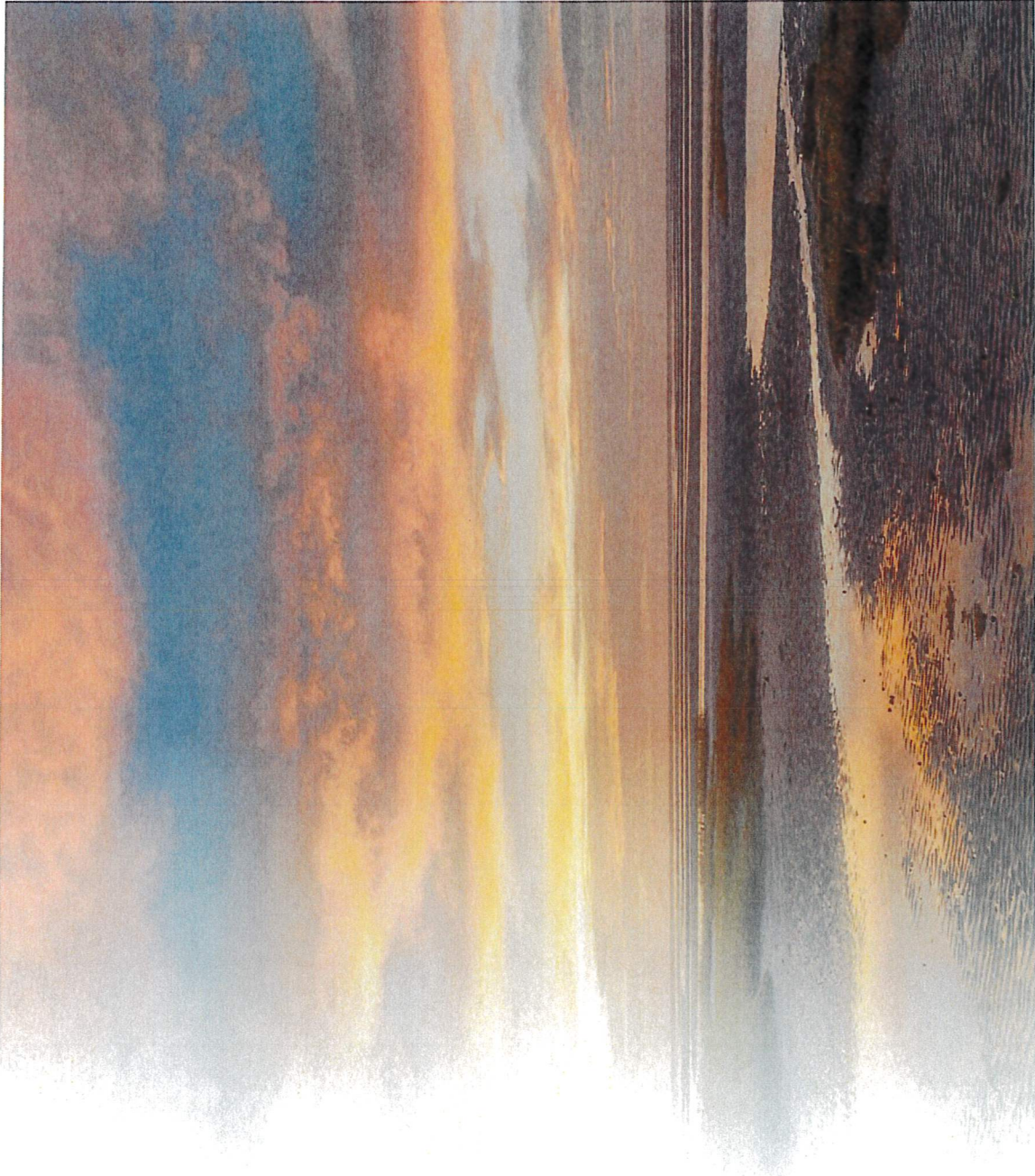
**The purpose of this Home Rule Petition is to reduce use of the most toxic pesticides in the Town of Orleans in order to protect the public and wildlife from the hazards of pesticides, promote a healthy environment for all and safeguard our economy.**

**The reason we have to do a Home Rule Petition is in 2013 the State took away the right of Orleans to make its own decisions of what chemicals are allowed in our environment.**



### **Why is this an Economic Issue?**

- **Our natural environment and especially our waters is what brings people here and makes us want to stay in this special place.**
- **Now and in the future it is our most valuable environmental resource and economic asset.**
- **It directly affects every resident, property owner, visitor, and business in Orleans.**



## How do pesticides travel off property?

- Toxic chemicals from pesticides seep into the soil and groundwater; also become airborne, and can be found thousands of feet from the application site.
- They contaminate the air we breathe, the waters we recreate in, the aquifer from which we drink, and the soils in which we grow food for humans, animals and wildlife.
- Chemicals can travel approximately 1 foot per day through our sandy soils to our single source shared aquifer which can range from 0-30 feet deep



What are the potential health effects?

- Many studies associate pesticides with serious negative health effects including leukemia, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma: cancers of the brain, breast, prostate, testes and ovaries: heart disease, stroke, diabetes, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, ADHD, autism and other autoimmune diseases, as well as birth defects and reproductive harm.





## What are some impacts on wildlife and the environment?

- Butterflies, bees, insects and invertebrates are the 'building blocks of the food chain' accounting for 95% of animal species and their numbers are declining at an unprecedented rate of up to approximately 2% per year
- They pollinate 75-80% of crops and wild plants. They keep our soils healthy and are a major food source for our birds and fish.
- Insects break down plant matter and help recycle nutrients into the soil. Without any insects at all, most bird and amphibian species would be extinct within a few months.
- Their importance in the environment cannot be understated.

## Climate Change

- Climate change is one critical example where scientific evidence indicates that pesticides contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emission, and create a vicious cycle of pollution and dependency.



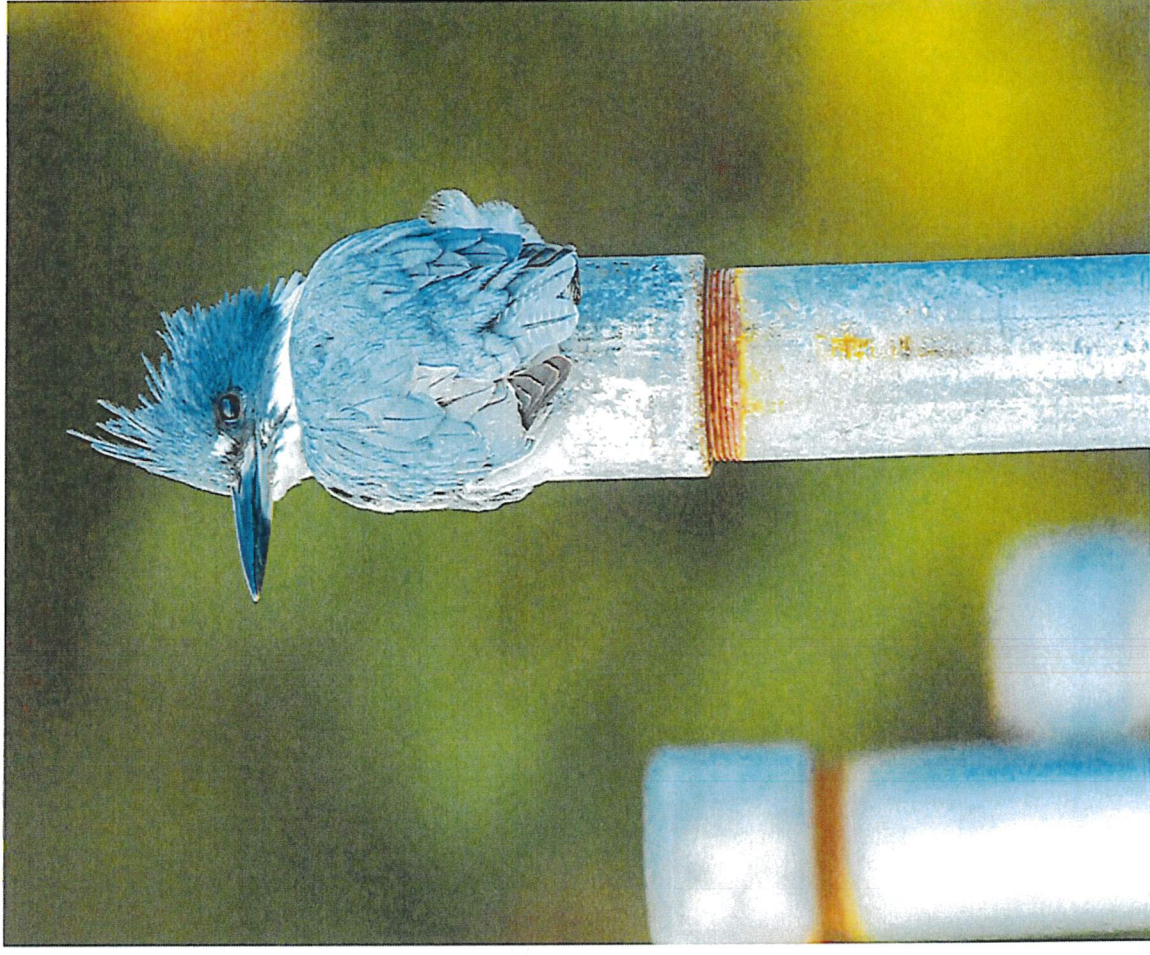
**What are the consequences?**

- **Negative impacts on health of people, pets, wildlife, environment, businesses, property values and economy are all unintended consequences but unfortunately, all are deadly real.**

- **We see locally and globally how polluted environments have a drastic and negative impact on the health of communities, their tourism and economies.**



- What can we do?
- Individually we can have an immediate impact on protecting our family, friends and environments by volunteering to change our behavior.
- Use natural, nonsynthetic, safe, effective products, and practices, and by educating our neighbors and ourselves in their use.
- The solution is free and costs the town and taxpayers nothing.



What are the exceptions?

- Indoor pest sprays and baits
- Insect repellants for personal and household use
- Flea and tick sprays, powders, and pet collars
- Kitchen, laundry and bath disinfectants and sanitizers
- Products that kill mold and mildew
- Usage for commercial farming and nurseries.
- Treatment of Invasive Plants for Ecological Restoration with approved waiver
- Emergencies

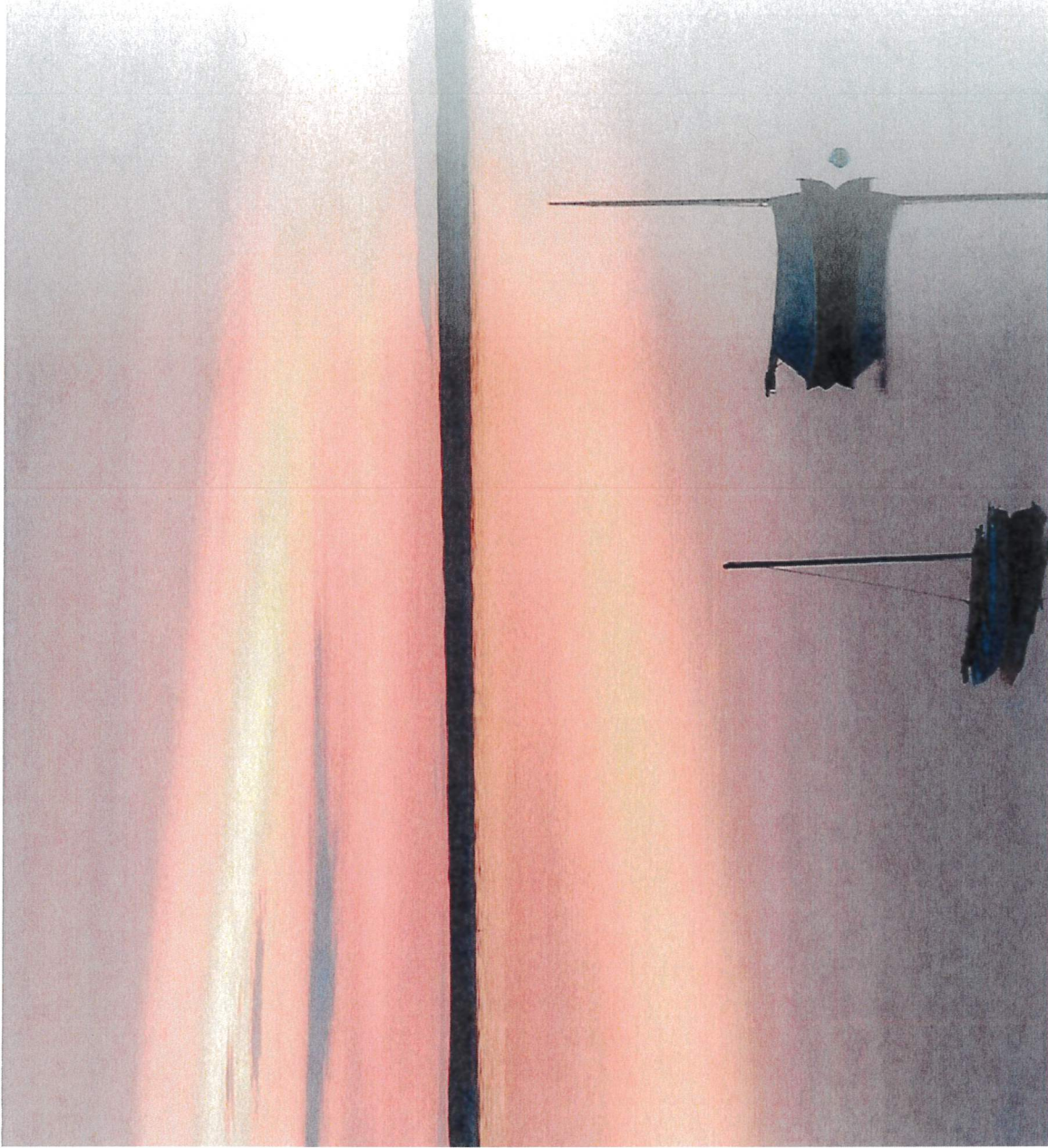


## What is Allowable?

- All nonsynthetic (natural) materials. With exception of Dept. of Agriculture material list 7 CFR 205.602
- Any synthetic material listed on Dept. of Agriculture 7 CFR 205.601 that is labeled for turf uses, subject to discretionary authority to require disclosure of inert ingredients; and
- Minimal risk pesticides on Environmental Protection Agency 25b list. Under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA).

## How enforcement? & What are penalties?

- Town Manager will decide reasonable enforcement structure.



We ask for your support to send a strong message.

- Help preserve this special place we love now and for your future generations by supporting this Home Rule Petition at Fall Town Meeting, so we can send a strong message to our State Legislature.

**“A society grows great when old men (and women) plant trees in whose shade they shall never sit.”**  
-Greek Proverb

For updated information, please visit:

<https://www.town.orleans.ma.us/1335/Pesticide-Home-Rule-Petition-2023>



Home Rule Petition Article

Current Town Policies

Communications/Handout

News

Volunteer Petition

Pesticide-Induced Disease Database

Reports, Studies, Documents, and Articles

Organizations, Resource Websites

State Laws and Home Rule Petition Bills

Interviews (Podcasts & Videos)

Movies/Documentaries

Informational Presentations

Support Statements/Vote

Contact/Volunteer

Frequently Asked Questions

Current Bill H4481

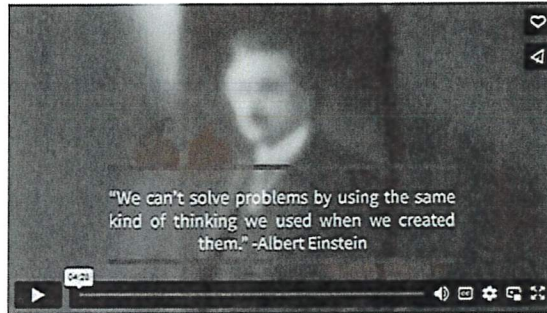
Home > Community > Community Initiatives > Barbours Home Rule Petition 2022 > Interviews (Podcasts & Videos)

### Interviews (Podcasts & Videos)

#### Podcasts:

- [Care and Islands Podcast by Clance Demrose](#)
- [WORMS Dr. Paula Serrry Talkin Bark](#)

#### Videos:



ESA - Orleans Pesticide Reduction from Lower.Care.TV on Vimeo



Environmental Future in Orleans Engages All Ages from Lower.Care.TV on Vimeo



Watch on YouTube



April 12, 2024

Andrew Gottlieb  
Executive Director

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Steven Koppel  
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Dottie Smith

Charles Sumner

The Honorable Rebecca L. Rausch, Senate Chair  
The Honorable Daniel Cahill, House Chair  
Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
State House  
24 Beacon St.  
Boston, MA 02133

**RE: An Act authorizing the town of Orleans to adopt a pesticide reduction bylaw (H.4481)**

Dear Chair Rausch and Chair Cahill:

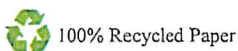
The Association to Preserve Cape Cod (APCC) submits the following written testimony to the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources regarding An Act authorizing the town of Orleans to adopt a pesticide reduction bylaw (H.4481).

Founded in 1968, APCC is the Cape region's leading nonprofit environmental advocacy and education organization, working for the adoption of laws, policies and programs that protect, preserve and restore Cape Cod's natural resources. APCC focuses our 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.

Exposure to many types of pesticides has been linked to adverse human health impacts, including asthma, liver and kidney damage, developmental disabilities, birth defects, nerve and immune system damage, disruption of the endocrine system, and cancer. Pesticide impacts in the natural environment have proven to be equally problematic, causing harm to wildlife, including rare species and beneficial pollinators. Stormwater runoff containing pesticides can contaminate freshwater ponds and streams, coastal bays and estuaries, and water supplies—which is of particular concern across the Cape Cod region due to the sensitive nature of our water resources and the Cape's reliance on groundwater as the source of its drinking water.

APCC supports efforts by municipalities to reduce the use of pesticides on public and private property in order to protect the environment and human health. In pursuing that local objective, APCC also supports the ability of municipalities to adopt

482 Main Street | Dennis, MA 02638  
Tel: 508-619-3185 | info@apcc.org | www.apcc.org



*APCC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

commonsense bylaws and regulations that provide practical and effective actions to reduce pesticide use and that promote responsible stewardship of the environment. We respectfully request that the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources give a favorable report to H.4481.

APCC thanks the committee chairs and members of the committee for this opportunity to provide written testimony.

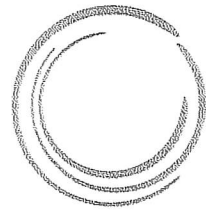
Sincerely,



Andrew Gottlieb  
Executive Director

cc: Sen. Julian Cyr  
Sen. Susan Moran  
Rep. Sarah Peake  
Rep. Christopher Flanagan  
Rep. Kip Diggs  
Rep. David Vieira  
Rep. Dylan Fernandes  
Rep. Steven Xiarhos  
Orleans Select Board

1234 FIVE STREET - 12345  
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1234 FIVE STREET  
1234 FIVE STREET

April 10, 2024

Via E-Mail: [JointCommittee.Environment@malegislature.gov](mailto:JointCommittee.Environment@malegislature.gov)

Chairs of the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
24 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02133

Re: Bill H. 4481, An Act Authorizing the Town of Orleans to Adopt a Pesticide Reduction Bylaw

Dear Chairs of the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources,

I am writing in support of efforts by the Town of Orleans to reduce the impacts of pesticides on our environment. Pesticides have known human and animal impacts beyond their intended use. On Cape Cod, the detrimental effects of locally applied pesticides may have a broader impact due to our geology and shared sole source aquifer. As Cape Cod faces multiple threats to the quality of our water supply and integrity of our ecosystems, we support efforts to reduce and manage toxins in the environment.

Pesticides are often misapplied, resulting in pollution of our drinking water and in harmful and unnecessary loss of beneficial insects. Birds, snakes, and mammalian predators can be the collateral loss of targeting rodents, not only disrupting our natural systems, but potentially impacting rare and endangered species as well.

While Commission staff support this effort for the reasons cited, we recommend careful consideration of the final wording of the bylaw to allow for prudent use and management of pesticides to protect human health, safety, and the environment, where other alternatives are not available.

Regional regulatory guidance aligns with Orleans's proposed pesticide reduction bylaw. The Water Resources Technical Bulletin identifies pesticides as a hazardous material that, when released into the environment, will pose a threat to groundwater and drinking water supplies. Water resources objectives recommend non-pesticide control measures be used to maintain pest populations but allow selective pesticides that result in the lowest possible risk to health and the environment to be considered when no effective non-pesticide control measures are available. Similarly, the wetland, wildlife and plant habitat objectives identified in the Cape Cod Regional Policy Plan generally discourage the use of chemicals to treat invasive species except in situations where chemical management would reduce adverse impacts on the environment.



I look forward to continued progress as Orleans works to address this important environmental challenge.

Sincerely,

Kristy Senatori  
Executive Director

CC: Karen Zirkle, Office of Chair Cahill  
Jacob Newman, Office of Chair Cahill  
Erica Woloszynski, Office of Chair Rausch



# BARNSTABLE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

SUPERIOR COURTHOUSE  
3195 MAIN STREET  
P.O. BOX 427  
BARNSTABLE, MASSACHUSETTS 02630  
PHONE: (508) 375-6648

SHEILA R. LYONS  
Wellfleet

RONALD BERGSTROM  
Chatham

HOME RULED CHARTERED  
IN 1989

MARK R. FOREST  
Yarmouth

January 24, 2024

Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Senator Rebecca L Rausch- Chair  
Senator James B. Eldridge- Vice Chair  
Representative Daniel Cahill- Chair  
Representative Dylan A. Fernandez- Vice Chair

Dear Chairs of the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources,

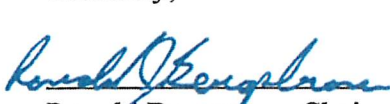
The Barnstable County Board of Regional Commissioners support Orleans Home Rule Petitions to protect its residents, visitors, waters, wildlife, and environment by addressing the serious negative effects of Fertilizer and Pesticides. Our natural environment is what brings people to Orleans and Cape Cod and is what makes us want to stay in this special place. Now and in the future, it is our most valuable environmental resource and economic asset. Its health directly affects every resident, property owner, visitor, and business in Orleans and Cape Cod.

Home Rule Petitions:

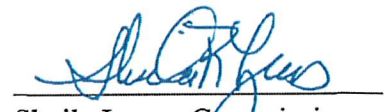
1. 'An act of regulating the Application of Fertilizer in Orleans' H.874 currently in the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
2. Pesticide Reduction Article 24, approved by super majority at Orleans Fall 2023 Special Town meeting, pending legislative process.

We join over a dozen local and regional organizations who have offered their support for these Petitions.

Sincerely,

  
Ronald Bergstrom, Chair

  
Mark Forest, Vice Chair

  
Sheila Lyons Commissioner

cc.  
Representative Sarah Peake  
Senator Julian Cyr  
Orleans Town Manager Kim Newman  
Orleans Select Board Chair Michael Herman

**CAPE COD REGIONAL GOVERNMENT  
ASSEMBLY of DELEGATES  
2023 Session  
Resolution No. 12**

Supporting a proposed Home Rule Petition by the Town of Orleans on Pesticide Reduction

**Be it Hereby Resolved by the Barnstable County Assembly of Delegates:**

**WHEREAS**, scientific studies associate exposure to pesticides with asthma, cancer, developmental and learning disabilities, nerve and immune system damage, liver or kidney damage, reproductive impairment, birth defects, and disruption of the endocrine system; and

**WHEREAS**, infants, children, pregnant women, the elderly, and people with compromised immune systems and chemical sensitivities are especially vulnerable to pesticide effects and exposure; and

**WHEREAS**, pesticides are harmful to pets and wildlife, including threatened and endangered species, soil microbiology, plants, and natural ecosystems; and

**WHEREAS**, toxic runoff from chemical fertilizers and pesticides pollute streams, lakes, estuaries, and drinking water sources; and

**WHEREAS**, the use of pesticides is not necessary to create and maintain green lawns and landscapes given the availability of viable alternatives practices and products; and

**WHEREAS**, people have a right not to be involuntarily exposed to pesticides in the air, water or soil that inevitably result from chemical drift and contaminated runoff; and

**WHEREAS**, sustainable land and building management practices that emphasize non-chemical methods of pest prevention and management, and least-toxic pesticide use as a last resort, will eliminate the use of and exposure to pesticides while controlling pest populations; and

**WHEREAS**, sustainable land and building management practices complement other important goals of Orleans' maintenance and administration, such as energy conservation and security; and

**WHEREAS**, Orleans embraces a precautionary approach to the use of pesticides in order to adequately protect people and the environment from the harmful effects of pesticides; and

**WHEREAS**, application of chemicals simply for aesthetic/cosmetic purposes has harmful consequences for our ecosystem, children and pets. Pollinators are directly harmed by applications particularly the indiscriminate (and long-term ineffective) spraying of pesticides.

**NOW THEREFORE**, The Assembly of Delegates supports the Home Rule Petition by the Town of Orleans to reduce toxic pesticide use in and on public and private property in the Town of Orleans

in order to promote a healthy environment and to protect the public from the hazards of pesticides, and for implementation of sustainable land and building management practices on all public and private property.

**The Assembly of Delegates adopted the foregoing Resolution No. 12 at its regular meeting on October 18, 2023 by a roll call vote with delegates representing 100.00% of the population of Barnstable County voting in the affirmative.**

Attested by:

A stylized signature of Owen Fletcher, consisting of the letters 'O', 'G', and 'F' in a bold, sans-serif font, followed by a cursive flourish.

Owen Fletcher, Clerk  
Assembly of Delegates

To: Orleans Selectboard

From: Orleans Agricultural Advisory Council  
Peter Jensen, Chair

Date: October 8, 2023

Dear Selectboard,

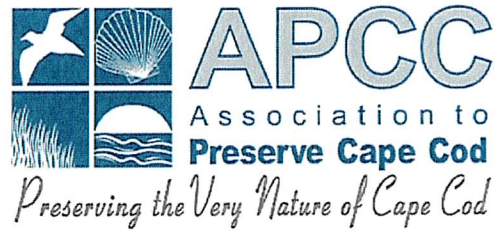
The Orleans Agricultural Advisory Council voted in unanimous support of the Pesticide Reduction Home Rule Petition. It is our hope going forward that this will provide opportunity for further public education on how a healthy soil, rich in organic matter, results in greater water retention and overall plant vigor with little to no requirement of pesticides. We also hope to facilitate the flow of science-based information in regards to the many alternative steps homeowners and gardeners can take to mitigate unwanted species in and around the home environment. All of this helps promote biodiversity rather than destroy it. Any steps we can take to help protect our open waters, our native pollinators and beneficial insects, our native landscapes and our sole source aquifer will be beneficial to all citizens of Orleans, and most especially those growing food.

We look forward to a resounding yes vote at Fall Town Meeting.

Sincerely,

Orleans Agricultural Advisory Council  
Peter Jensen, Chair

Gretel Norgeot  
Heather Bailey  
Rand Burkert  
Matthew Milan



The Association to Preserve Cape Cod supports the efforts of the Town of Orleans to regulate the use and application of pesticides in town. The use of pesticides contributes to the decline in beneficial species and is a major factor in the decline of essential pollinators. Land management practices that work with nature rather than chemical interventions result on healthier ecosystems and improved water quality. We applaud the town for its efforts.

Orleans Energy/Climate Action Committee

September 5, 2023

The Town of Orleans Energy/Climate Action Committee at its August 10<sup>th</sup> meeting unanimously voted to support the Home Rule Petition: An Act of Prohibiting Pesticides in the Town of Orleans which will be an article at the Fall 23 Town Meeting.

The committee endorses and supports the Select Board's decision to act against harmful lawn, garden, and roadside herbicides and pesticides for the protection of residents, the environment, water ways, wildlife and the town's economy. Understanding the linkage between human life, pollinators and insects, native plants, birds and the other wildlife is a challenge we all need to rise to. We want to thank the Select Board for taking this important step in promoting the natural web of life in Orleans.

Sincerely,

The Town of Orleans Energy and Climate Action Committee

John Londa, Chair

Hakin Janah, Vice Chair

Roger McDaniel, Secretary

Susan Chandler

Kevin Clements

David Jacobs

Paul Cass



## ORLEANS OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

May 31, 2023

Dear Mr. Herman,

The Town of Orleans Open Space Committee enthusiastically endorses and supports the Orleans Select Boards decision to act against harmful lawn and garden pesticides for the protection of the residents, environment, water ways, wildlife and the town's economy per your letter of March 29, 2023.

We are also supportive of the Home Rule Petition: An Act of Prohibiting Pesticides in the Town of Orleans which will be an article at the Fall 2023 Town Meeting in October.

We want to thank you and the Orleans Select Board for taking this important step and let you know that we are here to help you and the town in any way we can, in assisting to stop the spread of pesticides in Orleans.

Sincerely,

The Town of Orleans Open Space Committee

Stephanie Gaskill (Chair,) Lynn O'Connell, Christopher Keating, Hardie Truesdale, Patty Platten, David Herrick



August 21, 2023

Dear Orleans Select Board,

The Orleans Pond Coalition endorses the decision to act against harmful lawn and garden pesticides for the protection of the residents, environment, water ways, wildlife and the Town's economy, per your letter of March 29, 2023.

We support the town's Home Rule Petition to Reduce the Use of Pesticides in the Town of Orleans as a first step in this important initiative. We also urge the Town to do more to encourage a reduction in pesticide use.

For example, we encourage the Town to re-commit to the steps outlined in the 2012 Town Policy Statement on Fertilizers, Pesticides and Herbicides Program. In particular, as stated, *"to form a committee that will help educate the citizens of Orleans why we need to significantly reduce the use of nitrogen, phosphorous, pesticides and herbicides in the care and maintenance of properties."*

We believe if the Town joined forces with non-profits to help educate residents on the negative impact of toxic chemicals in pesticides, we could all see an immediate and positive impact on the health and well-being of our local environment, economy, and neighbors.

The Orleans Pond Coalition stands ready to help in this important effort.

Sincerely,

The Orleans Pond Coalition



*Helping to Preserve Our Quality of Life on Cape Cod*

Orleans Select Board  
October 2023

**We have a great responsibility living above an aquifer ~**

The Select Board in Orleans is being proactive in writing a Home Rule Petition (HRP) to help reduce pesticide use in town. This important opportunity will be voted on at town meeting on Monday, October 16, 2023.

The POCCA team supports the Orleans Home Rule Petition to help reduce pesticides. Hopefully other Cape Cod towns will read about this, understand the importance and join the same mission for we all live above an aquifer.

As we know pesticides are made to kill “pests” yet they are doing more harm than we realize. Our environment is negatively affected by the pesticides we use. There is much science proving real harm. We are affecting our own places of play (ponds), food sources (soil and air), oceans, and drinking water by using pesticides.

What concerns us most is, what is human use ‘killing’ impact? Will we ever know? And even if a number is stated as fact at one point, it is ever changing. Do you think it increases or decreases? Currently we are in a state of ‘free-for-all’ when it comes to pesticide products we use, how much and how often.

This is a very important matter affecting us all every day. We need to address it, and now is the time. We are glad the Orleans Select Board is taking a bold stand to help protect resources more by writing this Home Rule Petition on pesticide use.

Jane Goodall once said: “You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.”

POCCA Cape Cod ~ [Pocccapecod.com](http://Pocccapecod.com) ~ [pocccapecod@gmail.com](mailto:pocccapecod@gmail.com)



September 27, 2023

Dear Orleans Select Board Members,

This letter is in response to your March 29, 2023 letter requesting OCT's support for the Pesticide Home Rule Petition.

OCT supports reducing the use of pesticides in Orleans. We join the Association to Preserve Cape Cod, the Orleans Pond Coalition, and others in supporting the efforts of the Town to achieve that goal. The discussions resulting from the draft Pesticide Reduction Bylaw have served Orleans well. We hope to work with the Town, the business community, the non-profit community and Orleans citizens to turn the energy and visibility created by these discussions into a sustained, positive, and effective effort to reduce pesticide use and make best practices commonplace.

Sincerely,

Stephen O'Grady  
Executive Director  
[stephen.ogrady@orleansconservationtrust.org](mailto:stephen.ogrady@orleansconservationtrust.org)

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## **Re: Home Rule Petitions to Reduce Pesticide Use**

February 20, 2024

The Massachusetts Chapter of the Sierra Club has long supported efforts to reduce pesticide exposure at the state and local levels.

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 132B Section 5A requires the state “to reduce or eliminate, whenever possible, human or environmental exposures to chemical pesticides”, but this section has not been implemented in any measureable way since its passage in 2000.

For example, the Chapter has supported “An Act Empowering Towns And Cities To Protect Residents And The Environment From Harmful Pesticides” since its introduction. As this bill has not been passed, many cities and towns have recently initiated home rule petitions in order to have some local control over pesticide use in their communities. In particular, Cape communities must be vigilant in protecting its sole-source aquifer. The water supplies on the Cape are already threatened by multiple human sources of toxic chemicals, and pesticides should not be contributing to this ongoing contamination.

We commend the town of Orleans for leading efforts on managing outdoor, non-agricultural use of pesticides. Sierra Club research on Massachusetts data reveals that this application class, which is largely cosmetic, accounts for about 80% of all pesticide use by weight.

**The Massachusetts Sierra Club strongly endorses the “Home Rule Petition for a Pesticide Reduction Bylaw” passed by Orleans Town Meeting in 2023 and similar action by other communities.**

Respectfully,

Vick Mohanka

Mass. Sierra Club, Acting Chapter Director

[vick.mohanka@sierraclub.org](mailto:vick.mohanka@sierraclub.org)



# TOWN OF ORLEANS

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SELECT BOARD

TOWN  
ADMINISTRATOR

March 29, 2023

The Orleans Select Board voted unanimously on February 1, 2023 to take action to protect the health and safety of our residents, children, pets, visitors, the environment, gardeners, landscapers, waters, wildlife, property values and the economy. Please join us supporting a Home Rule Petition: An Act of Prohibiting the Application of Pesticides in the Town of Orleans, which will be an article at the Fall 2023 Town Meeting in October.

Pesticides are toxic chemical poisons designed to kill. They do not just stay in the place where they are applied. Pesticides seep into the soil and groundwater; can also become airborne, and be found many thousands of feet from the application site. They contaminate the air we breathe, the waters in which we recreate in, the aquifer from which we drink, and the soils which we grow food for humans, animals and wildlife.

Many studies associate pesticides with serious negative health effects including leukemia, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma; cancers of the brain, breast, prostate, testes and ovaries; heart disease, stroke, diabetes, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, ADHD, autism and other autoimmune diseases, as well as birth defects and reproductive harm.

Butterflies, bees and insects are the building blocks of the 'tree of life' food chain and their numbers are declining rapidly. They pollinate 75-80% of crops and wild plants. They keep our soils healthy and are a major food source of our birds and fish. Their importance in the environment cannot be understated.

Climate change is one critical example where scientific evidence indicates that pesticides contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emission, and create a vicious cycle of increasing pollution and dependency.

All are unintended consequences but unfortunately, all are deadly real. We see locally and globally how polluted environments have a drastic and negative impact on the health of communities and their economies. Individually we can have an immediate impact on protecting our family, friends and environments by volunteering to change our behavior by using safe, effective products, practices and educating our neighbors in their use. The solution is free and costs the town and taxpayers nothing.

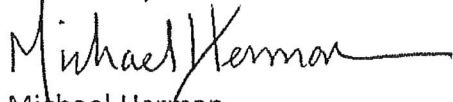
Help preserve this special place we love by supporting this Home Rule Petition at Fall Town Meeting, so we can send a strong message to our State Legislature.

Please share and discuss this with your committee/organization and if you agree, please provide a brief letter of support by 6/15/2023 and send to [mherman@town.orleans.ma.us](mailto:mherman@town.orleans.ma.us)

We have started a 'Pesticide Home Rule Petition 2023' homepage on our website [www.town.orleans.ma.us](http://www.town.orleans.ma.us) where information will be continually updated. We also will be following up with further communication to coordinate advocacy and public awareness workshops. If you have questions or would like to volunteer to help with this effort, please contact us.

..."(P)esticides (are) therefore of concern to us all. If we are going to live so intimately with these chemicals eating and drinking them, taking them into the very marrow of our bones – we had better know something about their nature and their power." – Rachel Carson

Thank You,



Michael Herman

Orleans Select Board Member

[mherman@town.orleans.ma.us](mailto:mherman@town.orleans.ma.us)



Pesticide Home Rule Petition 2023 |  
Orleans, MA

[www.town.orleans.ma.us](http://www.town.orleans.ma.us)

## **FAQ Pesticide Reduction Initiative**

The Purpose of this Home Rule Petition is to protect the people, wildlife and environment of Orleans by reducing the most toxic of pesticides

### **What are Pesticides?**

*Pesticides include all Insecticides, Herbicides, Fungicides, and Rodenticides*

Pesticide — Any substance or mixture of substances intended for—(i) preventing, destroying, repelling, or mitigating any pest; (ii) use as a plant regulator, defoliant, or desiccant; or (iii) use as a spray adjuvant such as a wetting agent or adhesive. The term ‘pesticide’ does not include cleaning products, other than those that contain pesticidal agents.

### **Why should we support this petition?**

To Protect our people, waters, wildlife and environment.

Water and environment is what brings people here and makes us want to stay in this special place of ours. It is up to us to protect the waters we love. It is our most valuable environmental resource and our most valuable economic asset. It directly or indirectly affects every resident, homeowner, visitor, and businesses in Orleans. Orleans has 63 ponds/lakes and approximately 50+ miles of coastlines. Water is our lifeblood, and it is our responsibility to keep it healthy.

### **What do we need to do to help?**

Pass a Home Rule Petition Article at Fall Town Meeting October 16, 2023.

### **What is a Home Rule Petition, and how does it differ from a bylaw?**

A Home Rule Petition is a request (petition) from a city/town for a new type of power from the State Legislature. It asks to let the Town of Orleans have the power to make its own decision to reduce the application of Pesticides and toxic chemicals entering our environment, a right the State took away in 2014.

### **What is the Home Rule Petition Process (HRP)?**

The HRP will be a warrant article at Town Meeting on October 16, 2023. Once passed, the Town will send the bill to its State Representatives and State Senators who seek to pass it in the legislature as a state law that would only affect the one municipality, Orleans, MA.

### **How long does it take?**

Once approved at Town Meeting it moves to the state level and it could sit in legislative committee for up to two years after which, if not passed, it will expire and need to go through the process again.

### **Can the Home Rule Petition wording be changed throughout the process?**

Yes, the Home Rule Petition Article has this wording included: “...and to authorize the General Court, with the approval of the Select Board, to make changes of form to the text thereto as may be necessary or advisable in order to accomplish the intent and public purpose of this legislation in order to secure passage.”

**When would this become effective?**

Once approved at State level it would become a bylaw.

**Why has the Orleans Select Board decided to act on this issue?**

Local organizations mobilized in the 2000's creating advocacy and education campaigns that were immensely helpful in getting the town to put together some bylaws in 2014. But times have dramatically changed in the last few decades. We have more proven science, and attitudes in protecting our environment have never been stronger. Citizens feel there is an ongoing and significant increase in the application and use of pesticides in Orleans. The Select Board is listening to their concerns and moving forward to address them.

**What can I do now to help protect our people, wildlife and environment?**

Change how you manage your property. Stop using pesticides. If you use a service tell them to stop using toxic synthetic pesticides and herbicides. Despite what the services may tell you, you do not need them.

Let your voice be heard and vote in support of no application of toxic synthetic pesticides at Town Meeting.

**Why are we not just stopping today when we know it harms people, wildlife and the environment?**

Protecting the environment has had a long history of support in Orleans and Cape Cod. Many people have worked very hard to forward this issue through significant research, studies, and reports published by various groups both locally and globally. But it has not been enough. We are at a tipping point where awareness to protect our environment has never been higher and we need your participation. It is time to act.

**Is this a new issue?**

No, this is not a new issue. We have been studying pesticides for over half a century and the overall trend is that they continue to become more toxic and our environment becomes more polluted.

**Why shouldn't I apply pesticides on my own property?**

When pesticides are applied to property (lawns, gardens, flowers, shrubs, trees, etc.) they do disappear or stay on property. They run off from irrigation use, rain and storms. Air and water carry pesticides off your property long distances onto and through other people's properties until it reaches the nearest (shared) water source. It permeates through sandy soil polluting the single source aquifer we all share.

If water moves through our sandy soils at an estimated 1 foot per day and with an average Cape Cod aquifer depth estimated under 30 feet, within a month whatever is applied to the ground may be in our shared aquifer we drink from.

Barry Commoner's First Law of Ecology states that: "Everything is connected to everything else." What you do on your land will have a widespread impact beyond the boundaries of your property. In a sense, each and every one of us 'live on the water.' –OPC Blue Pages 2008

**We already have policies, why are they not effective or enforced?**

Our current policies are outdated and allow for continued use of pesticides on properties with no enforcement penalties, which in turn continues the cycle of polluting our environment. The current Select Board has committed to devoting resources to reasonably enforce this special legislation.

**Why change?**

Doing nothing will change nothing and the health of our people and environment will continue to be negatively affected. It is time we make the hard decisions to challenge ourselves to find solutions that protect and enhance a healthy environment and economy for everyone living and visiting our beloved town.

We cannot be fearful of change, we must grow and address our climate and all issues head on.

As we are all stewards of this land, we need to ask not what our waters and our environment can do for us but what we can do for our waters and our environment.

**Why not just educate?**

Education alone has proven not to work. We have been educating about the harmful effects of pesticides but the use of pesticides continues to increase. Education is a very important part of this and any process, but to be effective we need to combine it with clear, reasonable and enforceable regulations.

It has been mentioned that people arriving on the Cape may not understand the effects of pesticides. The negative effects of pesticides is a national/global issue and is also happening in the towns they come from and is consistently reported in the local and national press.

**What methods can I use to treat for Termites, Carpenter Ants, Wasps, and Ants?**

There are various articles on our town website educational webpage [Natural Remedies for Pests](#) that provide natural solutions that work.

**What are the exceptions?**

**§6. Exceptions.**

A. The application of the following Pesticides is allowed:

1. Indoor pest sprays and insect baits (excluding rodent baits)
2. Insect repellants for personal and household use
3. Pet: Flea and tick sprays, powders, and pet collars
4. Kitchen, laundry, and bath disinfectants and sanitizer
5. Products labeled primarily to kill mold and mildew
6. Usage for commercial farming and nurseries.

**What pesticides would still be allowed?**

- All non-synthetic (natural) materials are allowed except a very few on Department of Agriculture list 7 CFR 205.602
  - Any synthetic (man-made) materials that are on the Department of Agriculture list 7 CFR 205.601 are allowed.
  - 25b listed pesticides under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) are allowed
- These lists of minimal risk pesticides are on our website.

**How are Pesticide applicators licensed?**

Massachusetts law requires that all persons who apply pesticides in public areas and private places used for human occupation and habitation must be in possession of a valid pesticide license or certification issued by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources

**Who enforces Pesticide regulations?**

Massachusetts Pesticide Inspectors are assigned to regions.  
Contact to file a complaint:  
Chief Pesticide Inspector Michael W. McClean to [Michael.Mcclean@mass.gov](mailto:Michael.Mcclean@mass.gov) or (617) 626-1782  
Pesticide Inspector in Plymouth, Bristol, Barnstable and Islands [Mark.Herlihy@mass.gov](mailto:Mark.Herlihy@mass.gov)  
Enforcement Hotline: (617) 626-1782

The Pesticide Program enforces of all pesticide Regulations in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Pesticide Enforcement regulates the Massachusetts Pesticide Control Act and the regulations 333 CMR 1- 14.

Local enforcement:

**§7. Enforcement.**

The enforcement authority shall be the Town Manager, or any town officials as designated by the Select Board to oversee and enforce the provisions of this bylaw.

It is our expectation that if we have clear laws in the town of Orleans, the majority if not all people, will follow them.

Other laws that protect our health and the environments we have been able to successfully enforce: smoking (Orleans was a leader), plastic bags, plastic water bottles under one gallon.

**What is the procedure in a potential health emergency?**

If an emergency public health situation warrants the use of Pesticides, which would otherwise not be permitted under this bylaw, the Town Manager or authorized designee shall have the authority to grant a temporary waiver on a case-by-case basis after an evaluation of all alternative methods and materials.

**How will this affect businesses?**

The Select Board is strongly committed to working together and supporting solutions that benefit our local businesses and the whole community. American business is built on innovation and this is an opportunity to shift customers into safe alternative products and practices. It is a great opportunity to truly focus on our beautiful native drought tolerant grasses, plants, flowers, shrubs and trees (and pollinators). Also for our garden club and environmental organizations to use their expertise to help educate.

We understand our businesses have customers from surrounding towns. This does not restrict businesses from selling any pesticide they choose but only prohibits the application to property in Orleans. It is the homeowners' responsibility what is put on their property.

Note: This is a living document. It will be updated and additional FAQs added as needed.

For more information please visit the Pesticide Home Rule Petition 2023 webpage on the Orleans town website: <https://www.town.orleans.ma.us/1335/Pesticide-Home-Rule-Petition-2023>



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