



TOWN OF HAWLEY  
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Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs  
Via Email: EEAopt-out@mass.gov

RE: Town of Hawley 2021 Alternative Mosquito Management Plan Application.

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to inform you of the Town of Hawley's decision to opt out of any kind of aerial mosquito spraying, whatsoever, whether conducted by State agencies or locally. We will be sending you our Alternative Mosquito Management Plan shortly.

On May 11, 2021 at 6:30 PM, the Hawley Select Board held a duly posted public meeting to discuss whether the Town of Hawley should vote to opt out of the possible mosquito control spraying conducted by the State Reclamation and Mosquito Control Board. The application process was discussed, along with the pros and cons of opting out. Meeting participation included the Board of Health, (one and the same as the Select Board in Hawley), the Town's Health Agent, Randy Crochier, and interested members of the public. We received several comments from the public regarding the issue of spraying. These included a range of opinions and concerns. Although some spoke in favor of spraying, the majority of sentiment appeared to be in opposition. Our Select Board/Board of Health concurs with this sentiment.

In Hawley, multiple landowners are engaged in organic farming which provides one concern. We also have yet to receive any answer to repeated inquiries about how the fact that approximately 50% of our land area belongs to various State Forests affects jurisdictional issues. Additionally, Hawley is home to a number of unique, fragile ecosystems, including one of the largest pre-historic high elevation bogs to be found in this region, which contains several rare and ancient carnivorous plant species that depend on insects for sustenance.

**Perhaps most importantly, we are well aware that pesticides designed to kill mosquitoes do not only kill mosquitoes. They kill or affect many other life forms, including beneficial insects, bugs, and pollinators.** At a time when pollinator health and its effect on our

local food growing infrastructure and food security has become a major concern in this Commonwealth, we are dismayed that such measures are even on the table for consideration.


Additionally, there is hardly any kind of assurance that this spraying will kill all or even most of the mosquitoes, many of which exist well beneath heavy tree cover. In short, then, we are of the opinion this aerial spraying will be of limited benefit while quite possibly having many unintended consequences and will likely do more harm than good.

**Finally, there are many more effective measures that can prevent mosquito borne diseases from spreading, including education, water drainage, avoidance of outdoor activities around dusk, citronella candles, bug nets, and bug repellent. These measures work and, because aerial spraying cannot possible kill all the mosquitoes, we're going to have to take them anyways.** So once again, we see little value in engaging in such a harmful activity as widespread aerial spraying, when it will not in any way change the need for people to continue taking the aforementioned precautions, which, in any case, have much higher efficacy.

We will shortly be submitting a plan for how we intend to alternately address the problem of mosquito borne illnesses. This plan will be focused primarily on public outreach and education and will not involve any kind of pesticide application whatsoever under any circumstances. We apologize that we could not provide this plan at the time of writing this letter, however, this entire situation has been characterized by extremely short notice, ambiguity, and far more questions than answers; a regrettable situation that has all the hallmarks of rushed planning and poor communication with stakeholders; one which we have had no role in creating, but now must address.

Thank you for your considerate attention to this letter. Please note that we have copied our local legislative delegation and the Governor's Office. To these individuals we ask this: **give us more time, give us more clarity, give us more flexibility, and please consider embracing more effective, enlightened, and less detrimental solutions than the same, ecologically unsound, measures that Rachael Carson debunked nearly six decades ago in her groundbreaking book *Silent Spring*.** We believe there are much better options for solving this problem in the twenty-first century.

Sincerely,

  
Hussain A. Hamdan  
Chairman, Hawley Board of Selectmen

CC: Rep. Paul Mark  
Sen. Adam Hinds  
Sen. Jo Comerford  
Governor Charlie Baker