



BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS

Fire District No. 2

20 Woodbridge Street • South Hadley, MA 01075

Tel: (413) 532-9210 • Fax: (413) 534-5949

January 10, 2019

Dear South Hadley Planning Board Members:

In 2004, the U.S. Geological Survey, which is a part of the Department of the Interior, provided a report to Fire District #2, in which it detailed the results of an extensive examination of the hydrology of the Dry Brook Well area. Dry Brook Hill, as you know, is a part of the Zone II wellhead protection area. The Geological Survey study showed that the level of water in our two wells rises and falls in synchrony with changing water levels in the nearby river. It also showed that groundwater levels in the area rise and fall together with the river water levels. In addition, the study showed that water reaches our wells both from under the river and from under Dry Brook Hill. Pumping tests that were a part of the study demonstrated that the relative amounts of water flowing to our wells from under the river and from under Dry Brook Hill fluctuates, depending upon the pumping rate at the wells. It's clear from this study that a complex and dynamic interplay of several factors affects how and from where water reaches our wells. We do not know what the removal of such massive amounts of overlaying material from Dry Brook Hill might have on our wells. We feel that the Planning Board should require an independent professional judgment on this important matter before making a decision on the request for a Special Permit.

In 2003, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) provided a Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP) report to Fire District #2. In that report, the DEP made it clear that the wells are at risk from contamination. Quoting from the report, "The well is located in an aquifer with a high vulnerability to contamination due to the absence of hydrogeological barriers (i.e., clay) throughout the Zone II that can prevent contaminant migration."

If this special permit is approved, Dry Brook Hill will be removed. This will increase the chances of contamination of the underlying aquifer by the mining operation, or by illegal dumping after the mining is complete. We are concerned that the applicant for the special permit seems to have had little regard for the possibility of operations-related ground contamination at the nearby mining site. At a recent Planning Board meeting, a company spokesperson admitted that at that time there were no safety protocols, spill containment protocols, or containment materials in place. That statement is consistent with observations made by members of the group who visited the site on September 6, 2018. Furthermore, the mining area is inadequately protected from trespassers, which invites unauthorized ATV traffic and vandalism.

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As guardians of the District #2 water supply we are duty bound to express these concerns about the proposed expansion of the mining operation into Dry Brook Hill. To our concerns we must add those of the many water consumers in the District who have expressed their alarm to us about this matter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Francis J. DeToma".

Francis J. DeToma, Chair
S. Hadley Fire District No. 2
Water Commission