

Intro

My name is Suzanne Pasko, 41 Old Farm Road. I have been a resident of Wellesley since 1996 and I am an elementary school teacher in Wellesley Public Schools. Thank you for this opportunity to speak again with the Wetlands Protection Committee and the public.

As some of you may recall, I have spoken to the Wetlands Committee in the past about the significant dangers of blasting with chemical explosives in wetland areas. Most recently, I presented to the Committee in 2017 about the risks of blasting with chemical explosives in the proximity of wetlands and a vernal pool habitat. The Committee has been thoughtful in the past regarding blasting in the wetlands and countless residents are grateful for this consideration.

When contractors blast with chemical explosives, they are blasting to have a quick, cheap, and dirty solution to rock removal. When most people think about blasting, they think about the noise and the vibrations, often overlooking the fact that the big boom is actually caused by a violent, incendiary chemical reaction. These chemical reactions are fueled by chemicals like

Ammonium nitrate	Fuel oil
Pentaerythrol tetranitrate	Hexahydro 1, 3, and 5
Trinitro 1, 3, and 5	Triazine CRDX
Nitroglycerin	Nitrocellulose

Perchlorates - sodium perchlorate, ammonium perchlorate and potassium perchlorate

The Department of Environmental Protection in Massachusetts re-issued a memo in December 2017 about the environmental contamination caused by perchlorate-containing explosive products. Perchlorates found their way into public water supply wells in sites across Massachusetts, and blasting contractors are still using them throughout the commonwealth.

I want to take a moment to talk about why chemical explosives like perchlorates are toxic contaminants. They are highly soluble and travel significant distance in groundwater. They persist in the environment, and this is a particular concern as they rapidly accumulate in wetland plant life. It is critical to note that there are no efficient degradation pathways for the chemicals used in blasting. We can all attest to the fact that wetlands are harmed by three things: polluted run-off, chemicals, and hydrologic alterations...blasting with chemical explosives does all three of these things, causing great harm to what little wetlands we have left.

Given that the town is still grappling with the legal, financial, and health-related aftermath of PFAS or forever chemicals contamination, we can not overlook the implications of continuing to pump more toxic chemicals directly into our wetlands and waterways.

Wellesley is at a critical moment in its history to protect our remaining wetlands and blasting near our wetlands continues to pose a significant environmental risk. I hope the Wetlands Committee continues to be thoughtful and progressive on this vital issue. Thank you for your consideration.