



# TOWN OF WAKEFIELD

## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

February 9, 2023

David DiBarri, Superintendent-Director  
Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational HS  
100 Hemlock Road  
Wakefield, MA 01880

Stephen Maio, Town Manager  
Town of Wakefield  
1 Lafayette Street  
Wakefield, MA 01880

Northeast Metro Tech Building Committee  
100 Hemlock Road  
Wakefield, MA 01880

Northeast Metro Tech School Committee  
100 Hemlock Road  
Wakefield, MA 01880

Town of Wakefield Conservation Commission  
1 Lafayette Street  
Wakefield, MA 01880

Town of Wakefield Zoning Board of Appeals  
1 Lafayette Street  
Wakefield, MA 01880

Re: Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocation School building project

Dear Superintendent-Director DiBarri; Mr. Maio; Members of the Northeast Metro Tech Building Committee and School Committee; and Members of the Town of Wakefield Conservation Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals:

*The Wakefield Environmental Sustainability Committee agreed to send this letter by unanimous vote of all members present at its meeting on February 9, 2023.*

The Town of Wakefield recognizes that sustainable environmental practices are critical to protecting and enhancing the ecological and economic health of our community and surrounding areas. The Wakefield Environmental Sustainability Committee (ESC) works with the Wakefield Town Administrator, Town Departments, Boards, and Commissions to assist and advise on ways to encourage balanced and responsible environmental stewardship aligned with Wakefield town priorities.

On February 14, 2022, members of the ESC wrote to Superintendent DiBarri and Town Manager Maio to provide input on the Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational School (NEMT) building project. In that letter, we offered our assistance and requested inclusion and the opportunity to review those issues related environmental stewardship at the School and on the affected properties. After an initial acknowledgement via email from Superintendent DiBarri on February 28, 2022 (attached) offering to include us in discussions "to address environmental and sustainability issues/options related to our project," we have not since been contacted by representatives from the School or the Building Committee.



However, we have been contacted by many members of the Wakefield Community who have expressed considerable concerns regarding several purported environmental impacts of the current preferred building plan ("C3"), including canopy loss, disruption of wetlands, water quality issues, and impacts on the neighboring protected lands. These concerns do not seem to be limited to a few vocal detractors; at the time of this writing, over 4,800 people have signed a petition asking that site C3 not be pursued because of these concerns. Finally, we also note that several of the community members who have contacted us have also expressed concern about the process.

The Environmental Sustainability Committee does not serve in any capacity of approving or regulating building projects in the town, nor do we purport to have the expertise to evaluate the specific merits of the arguments of either the project's detractors or supporters. Instead, we ask that those agencies and Committees within the Town charged with approving and overseeing construction projects such as this actively revisit their oversight of the project to ensure these concerns are being fully heard and evaluated, and to act to mitigate the environmental impacts of the eventual construction to every extent possible, and in accordance with the Town's commitments to do so under the Resilience Evaluation Framework of the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness plan<sup>1</sup>. We further ask that the Leadership of the NEMT and the Building Committee similarly prioritize reduction of environmental impacts of this important project as it moves forward.

Sincerely,

The Members of the Town of Wakefield Environmental Sustainability Committee

cc:

Joseph DeSantis, PMA Consultants LLC, Braintree, MA  
State Representative Donald Wong  
State Representative Kate Lipper-Garabedian  
State Senator Jason Lewis  
Wakefield Town Council

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.wakefield.ma.us/sites/g/files/vyhlf3986/f/uploads/mvp-resilience-evaluation-framework.pdf>