

Ferns wastewater discussion and WWTF clarification



MassDEP - Northeast Region
Official correspondence

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AM

To: Project team

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Good morning,

Thank you for the updated information provided during our virtual meeting on Monday, June 1, 2026. MassDEP appreciates the project team's full evaluation of potential options to meet the wastewater needs of the proposed restaurant. After consideration of the options discussed for wastewater management, MassDEP has concerns with the lack of certainty for a permanent or proposed interim solution.

Given that there is no commitment from the Town to allow a sewer connection to the wastewater treatment facility at Carlisle Public Schools, or certainty that the Board of Health would allow use of outdoor portable toilets at the restaurant as an interim solution, MassDEP is unable to provide further feedback on wastewater disposal options at this time. MassDEP encourages the project team to continue discussions with the Town to resolve these outstanding issues.

Additionally, MassDEP would like to correct some misinformation presented in a June 3, 2026 Carlisle Mosquito article about Ferns. The article reported that the Board of Health regulates the school's septic-system leach field, but not the wastewater treatment facility, which is regulated by the State. This is incorrect. Both the wastewater treatment facility and the leach field serving Carlisle Public Schools are regulated by MassDEP under a groundwater discharge permit.

The article also indicated that a Board of Health member said the State had determined that the wastewater treatment facility was underutilized but needed a reserve, leaving no capacity available to use. MassDEP has not made any determination that the wastewater treatment facility has no additional capacity available.

MassDEP looks forward to continuing to work with the project team on this project.

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