

Siasconset Beach Preservation Fund
PO Box 2279
Nantucket MA 02584

By Email

January 9, 2023

Jason Bridges, Chair, Select Board
Libby Gibson, Town Manager
Town of Nantucket
Nantucket, Massachusetts 02554

Dear Jason and Libby:

With a profound sense of disappointment, SBPF has decided to conclude its decade-long effort to protect the public assets and homes along northern Baxter Road from the ravages of sea level rise and coastal erosion. Our disappointment is particularly deep because we have successfully demonstrated (through years of hard work and study) an environmentally and economically sound method of protecting these assets and homes for decades into the future. In addition, a notice of intent that would implement these protections on a sustainable basis for the benefit of an expanded area currently is pending before the Nantucket Conservation Commission. Unfortunately, we have become convinced that a majority of the Commission will not support the notice of intent or any other reasonable alternative to demanding removal of the geotubes. Given this hurdle, we can see no path forward that is likely to result, at this time, in an approval of the expanded protections the Town of Nantucket and Sconset desperately need.

Elected and appointed officials, environmental scientists, coastal engineers, lawyers, SBPF's members, and regular citizens have invested millions of dollars and countless hours trying to find common ground with opponents of our project. We have done our best to find a cooperative way forward. Working together with the Select Board and Town administrators, we developed a viable plan to protect our Town and its citizens—a plan that is supported by scientific data that proves, beyond any reasonable scientific question, that the project has prevented and can continue to prevent erosion of the bluff while preserving Nantucket's beaches. Unfortunately, for the last two years the commission has steadfastly refused to even consider this approach, focusing only on jumping on a chance to remove the geotubes.

We thank the Town leaders and members of the public who have had the courage to work with us and stand up for a common-sense way forward. And make no mistake: this work created a sensible path that would allow the Town to work cooperatively with a united Sconset community to modify and extend (primarily with private funding) SBPF's successful project, ensuring longer-term preservation of Baxter Road and its community. It is a sad reality that local politics has driven us to a point of ill-conceived removal of the successful geotubes. The experts agree that removal will shortly result in the closing of northern Baxter Road with extremely costly

consequences, including the need to relocate utilities and access to homes, restricted access to the lighthouse, significant takings of private property and associated litigation, and the loss of significant property values and tax revenues.

SBPF and its members hope that one day in the future, reason, science, and good public policy will once again raise their heads and allow for sensible solutions. For now, however, a realistic opportunity for logical protections appears lost. As a result, SBPF believes that the Town and SBPF should withdraw their pending notice of intent. We urge the Town to take over the operation of the existing geotubes at least for a short time while continuing to try to work with the Commission to find a sensible way forward. Otherwise, sadly, the alternative is to give in to the opponents and proceed with removal of the current project.

If the Town is unable to find another way forward, SBPF will stand behind its obligations with respect to removal of the current project (no matter how foolish removal may be). We will continue working with the Town and the Commission to ensure that the existing project is removed in as safe and appropriate a manner as is possible, recognizing that the loss of the homes at the top of the bluff and the closing of Baxter Road will almost certainly follow shortly thereafter. To this end, as directed by the Commission, SBPF will submit documentation pertaining to its proposed removal plans to the Commission in advance of the Commission's January 12, 2023, meeting.

Sincerely,

Josh Posner, President
Siasconset Beach Preservation Fund
PO Box 2279
Nantucket, MA 02584
617-549-3232
joshuacposner@gmail.com
www.sconsetbeach.org

cc: Nantucket Conservation Commission