



Everett + Malden + Medford

Friends of the Malden River

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11/29/2021

To the Officers of the Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs,

The Friends of the Malden River are filing public comment regarding the updated MEPA Protocol for Analysis of Project Impacts on Environmental Justice Populations to be enforced as of January 1, 2022. We are in favor of these protocols to protect and to entrust all of our residents, especially the underserved in projects that will affect their lives and their surrounding environment.

The Malden River connects two major Environmental Justice Communities, the Gateway Cities of Malden and Everett. Being gateway cities, Malden and Everett have transitioned from being industrial legacy cities to cities that are rehabilitating from the industrial legacy polluters. The disproportionate burden of decades of unregulated industrial pollution has taken a large toll on these cities. Developers of potential projects vie for the potential of these cities and they should invest and improve the properties for the benefit of the neighborhoods.

Economic growth is necessary to heal the harm done to these cities. But there needs to be strong and impartial scrutiny with all new development; this scrutiny must be enforced. Mitigation of past polluters must prevail before any development. The developers are not only buying the present property; they are purchasing the history of the property: the good, the bad and the ugly.

Public Involvement Plans and thorough community outreach is critical to rebuild the trust that has been lost over the decades of environmental abuse. Transparency of the local municipality must be apparent to all of the communities. Community based organizations need to be involved and have their input valued. Developer's plans to reach out to these organizations must be evaluated, reviewed and checked throughout the process. For example, one notice does not constitute a thorough community outreach.

These future developments should benefit the Environmental Justice Communities. Sincere community outreach should be boots on the ground. The community outreach team need go to public events; they need to go to where the residents are! This is manageable through community-based organizations.

Because this work of outreach is complex, there needs to be financial support for organizations to provide the community outreach. Funding would cover the costs of translated materials and disbursement. Public meetings need translation services. Needs of the community, including childcare should be covered.

Sincerely,

Karen Buck, President
Friends of the Malden River

Mission of The Friends of Malden River: The Friends of the Malden River seek to promote awareness of and interest in the Malden River, improve its water quality, and increase access for public enjoyment.