

Mosquito Control Task Force Listening Session
Summary of Oral Comments
May 3, 2021; 11:00-1:00pm

The purpose of this session was for the Mosquito Control for the Twenty-First Century Task Force to accept comments pertaining to mosquito control, for the task force to use in developing recommendations. This session was held remotely under the Governor's Order issued on March 12, 2020, which authorizes a public body to meet remotely and suspends the requirement of a quorum on the body being physically present at the meeting location.

Attendees signed up if they wished to speak at the listening session. All attendees who signed up before 12:55pm were called upon to speak. It was requested that comments be kept to about 3 minutes, to ensure as much feedback as possible was shared with the task force. Written comments related to this session were accepted through May 5 at 5:00 p.m.

The listening session commenced at 11:03 a.m. Dan Sieger provided an introduction, presented a series of background slides and ground rules, and then opened the public comment period.

The Mosquito Control Task Force received oral comments from 38 separate individuals. There were 258 attendees in the session, which included task force members and Commonwealth of MA employees.

The session concluded at 1:17 p.m.

Summary of Oral Comments

The following notes summarize comments received by listening session attendees.

- Questions and comments about the mosquito spraying opt-out programs
 - Program to enable municipalities to opt-out of SRMCB mosquito control spraying:
 - Several comments proposed that that this be an opt-in program, versus an opt-out program
 - Open questions:
 - Should participation in an MCD exempt a community from state mosquito control intervention?
 - Could local decisions to opt-out of mosquito control district spraying carry over to SRMCB spraying?
 - Related to process itself:
 - Several questions were raised by members of the public that pertained to municipalities' decisions to opt-out of SRMCB spraying. Attendees were notified of process by which questions could be answered
 - Comments were made that indicated concern over municipality notification of the program announcement, requested additional information and communication on program by EEA
 - Comment proposed that individual property owner requests for opt-out should never be nullified during state of emergency, especially for people requesting due to specific health conditions
- General opposition to pesticide use in control of mosquitoes included:
 - Concern about potential impacts of spraying – 18 comments spoke to this
 - Comments included concern about impacts of spraying on organic farms (3), bees and other pollinators (6), birds (2), fishing industry incl. lobsters and other aquatic life (2), pets (1), other insects (4), nuisance mosquitoes (i.e., non-virus carrying mosquitoes that play a role in the ecosystem) (1), in addition to general mentions of biodiversity and ecological impacts
 - Concern about impact of spraying on medical conditions (3) – particularly as it pertains to respiratory and chemical sensitivities
 - Comment that residents moved to towns to access wetlands and forest environments – should be able to maintain pristine conditions for those residents
 - Comment pertaining to observed reduction in biodiversity
 - Comment noting that there are a lot of residual effects we see today from chemicals used in the 1950s and beyond – on biodiversity and on drinking water and groundwater
 - Concern about impact of emerging chemicals entering soil and groundwater, and potential for unintended consequences thereafter
 - Concern over pesticide ingredients
 - Concern that products do not list all of their ingredients because they are proprietary or inert, and that the public doesn't know how ingredients may interact

- Concern over potential effects of inactive ingredients
 - Comment on the European precautionary principle, which requires a producer to prove it is not harmful before allowed on market, while onus falls on public in the U.S. – there are challenges of proof of harm without access to all pesticide ingredients
 - Comment on EPA pesticide review processes and history of EPA product approval/denial – legal use does not necessarily mean a product is safe
 - Comment that adulticide spraying should not be part of integrated mosquito solution until proven safe
 - Comment that we are not always aware of all the risks of pesticides or herbicide use
 - Comment about concerns with pace in which emerging chemicals enter the market
- Concern over PFAS in pesticides
 - Questions were raised with interest in a status update on the presence of PFAS in the containers in which the mosquito control pesticides are held
 - Concern about use of pesticides with PFAS in towns that use well water
- General comments on support for components of mosquito control included:
 - Comment that MA mosquito control projects meet and exceed industry standards by focusing on source reduction in public lands, training workers, disease and surveillance, and public outreach
 - Comment that MA districts are committed to best practices; support for the management practices governing the MCDs
 - Comment that MA spraying follows all scientifically based principles, including standards of integrity, peer review, and public transparency
 - Comments related to approach with integrated mosquito management (“IMM”):
 - IMM controls mosquitoes without significant risk to people or the environment
 - Adult treatment with spraying is one component of a solid pest management program
 - Comment that mosquito control staff in MA are licensed by state and annually there are continuing education classes provided through training programs or attending annual December meetings
 - Comment indicating support for prioritizing public education, individual responsibilities, and personal spraying and protection
 - Comment indicating support for a mosquito control program that employs ecological management strategies
 - Comment reiterating importance of mosquito control in providing for public health and protecting against bioterrorism agents
 - Comment that MA does good job educating public on avoiding bites
- Comments related to access to data and information
 - Request that resources be shared with municipalities, in order for municipalities to effectively execute upon goals of mosquito control
 - Members of the public made several requests for data and information:
 - Efficacy of spray events in reducing mosquito populations

- Efficacy of larviciding in reducing vector-borne disease
 - Evaluate impact of mosquitoes on human health
 - Evaluate impact of mosquitoes on outdoor industries and economies
 - Pursue universal surveillance of mosquito borne disease in MA
 - Does aerial spray reach the ground and have an impact in heavily forested areas?
 - Is it feasible for aerial spraying to adhere to town boundaries?
 - Information on studies on bird migration, and/or any plans to direct attention to this into the future
 - Comparison of science on public health vs. conservation, to ensure mosquito control policies are balanced
 - Comparison of mosquito-borne illnesses to other public health issues
 - Evidence of the effectiveness of aerial spraying to reduce human incidence of EEE and WNV
 - History of the science of EEE (including on the cycles of EEE)
 - What is known about efficacy of Anvil 10+10?
 - Could the public learn more about the risk/benefit ratios of chemical treatments?
 - Information that would enable municipalities to develop alternative mosquito management plans for the opt-out of SRMCB spraying program
 - Information about effects to neighboring properties for spraying and mosquito control on private property
 - Impact of CO2 in attracting mosquitoes
- In some cases, although science may exist, there exists an opportunity to aggregate that information for the public's use
 - History of mosquitoes in the U.S., prior to organized control
 - Incidence of mosquito-borne illness around the world, and how MA fits into a worldwide issue
 - Information on mosquito control pesticide products over time, pertaining to the comment made that products have been designed to become more specific to mosquitoes, with an ultimate goal of smallest possible impact on environment and non-target organisms
 - Information on the impact of mosquito control on the habitats of arguably affected organisms
- Mosquito control structure
 - Requests for additional support
 - Comment on more support for mosquito control districts, including administrative and budget-related
 - Comment on need for additional resources to manage risk levels (in response to a town in which there was a EEE death two summers ago)
 - Comment that a particular town does not participate in an MCD due to costs of membership
 - Comment to explore possibility of additional resources through the federal SMASH Act (Strengthening Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health Act;

supports state mosquito control programs), noted that bill is going through appropriations process

- Comment on improved distribution of and coordination of services across MA
- Concern over lack of choice over services provided by the mosquito control districts
 - Comment requesting ability to customize services received by the MCDs
 - Comments on lack of control over spraying by the MCD, on certain MCD policy on filling for exclusions, in particular
- Comment that spraying may not be the best use of funding
- Proposal to make changes to agencies and their roles coordinating with each other, to prevent delays, costs, overlooked regulations and laws
- Concern for oversight over publicly available pesticides and oversight of private mosquito control companies
 - Comment that homeowners are able to purchase pesticides over the counter, which could be better regulated
 - Comment that private pesticide companies are allowed to use pesticides on yards and properties - may use them without regard to bees/pollinators or boundary markers and may conduct daytime spraying
 - Requested that task force review gaps in regulations and laws that may exist for private applications

List of Individuals Providing Oral Comments

| First and Last Name | Affiliation or Job Title |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Gabrielle Sakolsky | Chair, Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Committee, American Mosquito Control Association; Superintendent, Cape Cod Mosquito Control |
| Gary Menin Sr | Elected Member - Sterling Board of Health |
| Laura Harrington | Professor of Entomology and Director of the Northeast Regional Center for Excellence in Vector-borne Diseases, Cornell University |
| Brendhan Zubricki | Essex Town Administrator |
| Christopher Horton | Superintendent Berkshire MCP |
| Gerald Clarke, Sc. D. | Chairperson, Board of Health, Town of Dover; Chairperson Water Resource Committee |
| Jeanne Galloway | Commissioner, Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District |
| David Brown | American Mosquito Control Association - Technical Advisor |
| Bill Murphy | Director of Public Health |
| Betsy Kovacs | Heath Board of Health Chairman |
| Charles Lubelczyk | Vice President, Northeast Mosquito Control Association |
| Roberta Flashman | Ashby Conservation Commission |
| Barbara Katzenberg | Town of Lexington, Town Meeting Member and Conservation Land Steward |
| Kimberley King-Cavicchi | Adreanna's Mom |
| Jane Alessandra | Montague Opt Out |
| Patti Page | Gloucester Opt Out Initiative |
| David Tapscott | Board of Health/MVP Core Team |
| Marcella Stasa | Concerned citizen with health concerns |
| Bill Pula | Chairman Pelham Board of Health |
| Cathleen Drinan | Community Liaison for Plymouth County Mosquito Control Project |
| Richard Seelig | Pelham Democratic Town Committee |
| Thomas Trainor | Member, Sherborn MA Groundwater Protection Committee |
| Don Ogden | The Enviro Show producer & co-host |
| Brenda Davies | Zero Waste Amherst member |
| Laura Oxley | Boylston resident |
| Joe Kurland | Select Board Member, Colrain |
| Elizabeth Kuzdeba | Chair, Leyden BOH |
| Stephanie Gelfan | Individual homeowner |
| Wayne Miller | The Beverly Farms - President |
| Dorothy McGlincy | Executive Director, Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commission |
| Kristen Healy | Associate Professor, Louisiana State University |
| Michael Lavery | Select Board Member |
| Zywia Chadzynska | Resident of Acton |
| John Farnsworth | Lancaster BOH Chair |
| Katherine Holden | Member BoH, Personal Chef, Homesteader |
| Gail Hassett | Board of Health |
| Kyla Bennett | Science Policy Advisor, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility |
| Nicholas Venti | Leverett Board of Health |