

Office of Drinking Water Quality

18 September, 2002

Dear Town Officials, Water Suppliers, and Citizens,

The Rhode Island Department of Health and the University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension are preparing to assess the threats to the sources of public drinking water in Scituate, Gloucester, Foster, Johnston and Cranston. In addition to the many small public water suppliers in the area, and residents who depend on private wells, these towns include the watershed for the Scituate Reservoir, the supply for Providence and much of the population of Rhode Island. We invite you to participate in this important public health initiative. An introductory meeting is scheduled for **October 21st, 2002 from 4 PM to 6 PM at the North Scituate Community House, 546 West Greenville Road. Directions and Agenda are on the back.**

This assessment is being done as part of a statewide effort in compliance with the 1996 amendments to the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. Community involvement is a major component of Rhode Island's EPA-approved Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP). In addition to fulfilling EPA's requirements, we hope to provide communities with quality information that will assist them in planning for future development, and addressing existing threats to water quality. Since the water suppliers and municipalities are the intended beneficiaries of this program, we feel it is appropriate and important that they be involved.

The "community involvement" in this program consists of three parts.

- The first is our need for current land use data and local knowledge about historical land use that may be a threat to future water quality.
- The second is advice in tailoring the assessments to the needs of the water suppliers and residents within the towns, and the interests of the Providence Water Supply Board.
- The third and perhaps the most important part is assistance with developing an outreach strategy to increase local awareness of drinking water quality and land use issues and to address the concerns identified by citizens and suppliers.

We will be explaining these three parts in detail on October 21st, and explaining the opportunities for public participation.

We would like to see representation from as many municipalities, water suppliers and citizens as possible. We hope that you can join us in this Source Water Assessment Program, and we look forward to seeing you on **October 21st at 4 PM**. Please let us know if you can attend, or if you would like to suggest other participants. Call Holly Burdett or Alyson McCann at URI Cooperative Extension at (401) 874 – 5398, or myself at the RI Department of Health at (401) 222 – 7769 for more information.

Sincerely,

Clay Commons, Environmental Scientist
Source Water Assessment Coordinator
(401) 222-7769; email safewater@doh.state.ri.us

Enclosures