

DUKES COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

July 15, 2026

Members of the Select Boards

Towns of Aquinnah, Chilmark, Gosnold, Edgartown, Oak Bluffs, Tisbury, and West Tisbury

Dukes County, Massachusetts

Re: Support for the Martha's Vineyard Island-Wide Emergency Management and Response Coordination Strategic Integration and Implementation Plan (the Plan)

Dear Members of the Select Boards,

On behalf of the Dukes County Emergency Management Association (DCEMA), we write to ask for your Board's support of the Martha's Vineyard Island-Wide Emergency Management and Response Coordination Strategic Integration and Implementation Plan. The plan was developed by the Olson Group, under the direction of Kyle Olson and Andrew Fercucci, in collaboration with the Emergency Managers and key stakeholders in Dukes County and shared with you earlier this year. The Plan, along with the key findings and recommendations, was presented to the public at large on May 28, 2026, at the Oak Bluffs Library.

The plan addresses a challenge each of our towns knows well: Martha's Vineyard's geographic isolation, which sets us apart from mainland communities in both risk and response. Storms, ferry disruptions, and seasonal population swings do not respect town lines, and our current limited emergency management capacity of individual towns and at the county level leaves gaps in coordination precisely when a unified response matters most. The plan lays out a five-year roadmap for closing those gaps through shared staffing, common protocols, and coordinated training across the island.

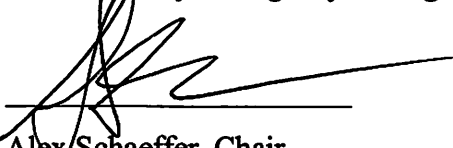
Central to its recommendations is a regional Emergency Management Coordinator position, shared across the six towns. There is a potential for funding part of the implementation of the Plan through the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) program. The Massachusetts Efficiency and Regionalization Grant is identified as another potential funding source. However, ultimately it would be the towns getting together in an effort to underwrite the cost of the implementation. This approach would give Martha's Vineyard a single point of coordination for emergency planning, training, and grant administration, while preserving each town's local authority over its own response operations.

DCEMA believes this plan represents a meaningful and achievable step toward a more resilient island, and one that positions us competitively for the funding regional coordination makes possible. We respectfully ask that the Select Board consider a vote of support, so that we may move forward together in pursuing the funding and staffing this initiative will require.

We are happy to attend a Select Board meeting to answer questions or walk through the plan in greater detail. Thank you for your consideration and for your continued partnership on emergency preparedness across Dukes County.

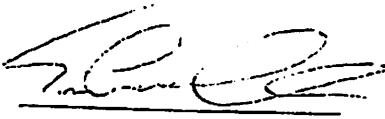
Sincerely,

Dukes County Emergency Management Association

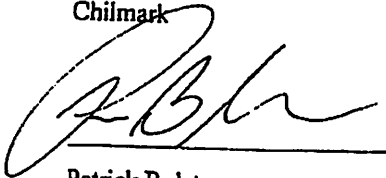


Alex Schaeffer, Chair
Edgartown

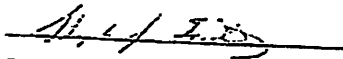
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Tim Carroll
Chilmark



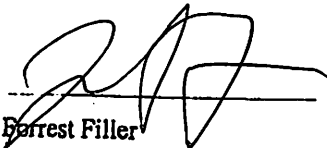
Patrick Rolston
Tisbury



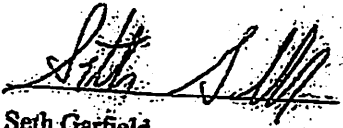
Stephen Foster
Oak Bluffs



Jennelle Gadowski
West Tisbury



Forrest Filler
Aquinnah



Seth Garfield
Gosnold



Martina Thornton, Vice Chair
Dukes County