



August 4, 2026

Letter of Support for the Island-Wide Emergency Management Strategic Plan

Dear Members of the Select Boards and County Commission,

Island Grown Initiative (IGI) is writing to express our strong support for the adoption of the Martha's Vineyard Island-Wide Emergency Management and Response Coordination Strategic Integration and Implementation Plan by each of the Island's Select Boards.

IGI works across all six Island towns to promote a strong local food system for everyone on Martha's Vineyard. We serve 1 in 5 members of our year-round community through the Island Food Pantry, and reach even more islanders through our prepared meals program, Community Lunch program, and gleaning program. We also coordinate the Island Food Equity Network, a group of 25 island organizations and businesses that support food access programs island-wide.

Our clients are especially vulnerable during emergencies, when the food access programs they rely on can become unreachable or unable to operate due to storm damage, power loss, or transportation disruptions. This is a shared, Island-wide vulnerability that calls for a shared, Island-wide response.

For that reason, IGI would welcome closer coordination among the Island's emergency managers so that food access needs can be addressed holistically for Island residents, rather than town by town. Today, responding to a disruption in food distribution can mean navigating six separate town governments and emergency management structures. We would greatly appreciate having a single point of coordination — one body or point person for the whole Island — with whom organizations like ours can plan ahead of an emergency and coordinate in real time during one. The Strategic Plan's proposed Multi-Agency Coordination System and shared island-wide resource inventory would give us exactly that: a consistent structure to plug into, so we can anticipate need, position food supplies, and get help to residents in need more quickly and effectively.

We are particularly encouraged by the plan's recommendation to establish a full-time Martha's Vineyard Emergency Management Coordinator, and its commitment to preserving each town's operational independence while building the shared coordination architecture the Island needs for multi-jurisdictional emergencies.

IGI enthusiastically supports adoption of this plan and looks forward to being an active partner in its implementation, particularly as it relates to food security and access for all Island residents during emergencies. Thank you for your leadership in bringing this important work forward.

Sincerely,

Noli Taylor
Co-Executive Director
Island Grown Initiative

noli@igimv.org; 508-687-9062; igimv.org