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September 1, 2016

Chairman Warren Doty
Chilmark Board of Selectmen
P.O. Box 119
401 Middle Road, Beetlebung Corners
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Wunee keesug Chairman Doty,
(Good Day)

The Martha's Vineyard Times recently published an article with comments from the Chilmark Harbormaster, Mr. Dennis Jason that are of great concern to the Tribe. The August 17, 2016 article titled *Strong winds send boats, rescuers flying off Menemsha Harbor* describes the coordinated effort between the Town of Aquinnah Harbor Master, Police Department, volunteers, Coast Guard and the Tribal Natural Department [NRD] staff to assist a vessel in distress on the west side of the Aquinnah jetty.

As you are aware, the NRD provides emergency assistance through agreements with local, state and federal agencies outside of Tribal boundaries. When called upon NRD staff members serve the Town of Aquinnah in the alternate capacities of Police Officers, Emergency Medical Technicians, First Responders, Deputy Shellfish Constables and Assistant Harbor Master in an effort to assist with the overall protection of the lands and waters the Tribe and Towns own and share. The Tribe truly strives to support positive working relationships with responding agencies and the public. To demonstrate this spirit of cooperation, I was advised that as recently as August 9, 2016, the Tribe provided the Town of Chilmark use of our response vessel to support the daily needs of your harbor department while the Chilmark vessel was being repaired. In addition to our cooperation as noted above, NRD provides environmental planning for projects and programs with proven direct benefits of significance to the Tribe, Aquinnah and Chilmark.

With this rich history of support and cooperation, I was disappointed to read the commentary of your appointed Harbormaster, Mr. Jason. The published article quotes Mr. Jason as saying, "...it was a poor decision to pull the vessel, which has a hole in the hull, off the jetty." And when the Aquinnah Harbormaster and Tribal personnel handed the boat off to the Coast Guard he is quoted as saying, "The Coast Guard got roped into it. They ended up with a hot potato in their hands."

I am not aware of the insight your employee has as it relates to the incident, since the report that I was provided by NRD Director Bret Stearns informs me that the Chilmark Harbormaster did not participate in the support of the distress response. According to the NRD Director, from the time the Tribe's rescue vessel was dispatched to the final disposition of the sailboat, the Chilmark Harbormaster had no direct involvement. In light of these facts, I do not view the statements attributed to the Chilmark Harbormaster as helpful for the circumstances or supportive of the relationship between our agencies. Do the Harbormaster's statements as quoted in the article reflect the position of the Selectmen of the Town of Chilmark?

The public statements have raised concerns within my government and I hope to provide a written response from the Town of Chilmark in the near future. Should you wish to contact me directly, I will make myself available.

Ahahpây,
(Humbly)

Tobias J. Vanderhoop
Tribal Chairman

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