



MARTHA'S VINEYARD BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

December 10, 2021

To All Island Boards of Selectmen & Town Administrators,

We are in an extraordinary building boom on Martha's Vineyard and all indicators point to sustained strain on surveyors, engineers, architects, general contractors, subcontractors and suppliers of the building industry for at least 3 to 5 years to come. This extraordinary growth of the backbone of the year-round island economy has an obvious upside, but it is nonetheless an unprecedented state of affairs whereby all affected are struggling to deliver services in a timely way to a demanding clientele.

Island-wide, most town building departments are experiencing concomitant pressure and are barely able to keep pace with the demands for permitting and inspection that are expected of them both by convention and by State law. We applaud the professionalism, knowledge and dedication that all the officials, new and old, bring to their departments. The effort they are making is to be sincerely commended. However, our membership is aware that most departments are seriously understaffed for the tremendous volume of duties they are required to perform every single day and it is causing delays and disruptions to our members' operations. The MVBA strongly recommends that staffing levels are increased to improve the workflow that the building departments are experiencing and to meet their obligations to taxpayers.

To that end, we are advocating for an immediate across-the-board increase in building permit fees to fund larger building department budgets with the following priorities:

- Salaries for new full-time professional and administrative hires
- Incentives to attract new hires
- Review of current compensation packages for current overworked building department staff
- Tie permit fees to building square footage and/or contract value
- Provide exemptions or fee reductions for first-time or affordable housing

Please consider implementing these or similar options with immediate effect to ameliorate the current excessive stress on the permitting and building industry on Martha's Vineyard, and all the working people who depend on it for their livelihood, including town employees, and taxpayers seeking to have work completed.

With respect,
MVBA Board of Directors