



*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1054

**DENISE PROVOST**

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RE: # 205244

November 9, 2018

Re: 15 registered voters submitting a proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment to regulate the siting of housing, schools, preschools, and long term care facilities near heavily trafficked roadways

Honorable Members of the Board of Aldermen:

I wish to weigh in in strong support of the passage of the above-referenced ordinance. For many years, I have filed similar legislation for adoption at the state level.

This effort has not yet resulted in the passage of my bills, yet a growing scientific literature demonstrates that traffic-related air pollution is extremely harmful to human health. Pollution containing tiny particles damages the lungs, worsening diseases like asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and, presumably by triggering the body's inflammatory response, heightening the risk of heart attack, stroke, and other illnesses. In 2013, the World Health Organization declared particle pollution – much of which comes from transportation sources – to be a cancer-causing agent.

In addition to lung and heart disease, exposure to ultrafine particle pollution can impair children's development, cause neurological damage, and shorten lifespans. Research at the Harvard School of Public Health links exposure to this kind of pollution with autism in children. In response to the weight of this research, the proposed ordinance sensibly aims to protect the people of Somerville from high levels of exposure to particle pollution.

Some of the best data in the world on the health effects of particulates has been conducted in Massachusetts. For instance, the Community Assessment of Freeway Exposure and Health (CAFEH), run by Dr. Doug Brugge of Tufts University, has documented elevated levels of ultrafine particulate pollution near highways, including elevated I-93 through Somerville. As Somerville considers changes to its zoning ordinance, it would be wise to factor in our knowledge about how motor vehicle pollution damages human health.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Denise Provost

Cc: Somerville Planning Board