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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
August 7, 2012

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**STATE HEALTH OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE PLANS TO CONDUCT  
ADDITIONAL AERIAL SPRAYING TO REDUCE RISK OF EEE  
IN SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS**

*Easton, Raynham, Taunton and West Bridgewater raised to Critical risk level*

**BOSTON** – The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced plans to conduct aerial spraying for mosquitoes in six towns in southeastern Massachusetts including Bridgewater, Easton, Norton, Raynham, Taunton, and West Bridgewater. Officials made the decision following the recent detection of numerous additional EEE-positive mosquito pools collected from sites in Easton and surrounding communities. Spraying will begin as soon as possible, following appropriate public notification and outreach. Residents are encouraged to continue checking local media and the DPH website at [www.mass.gov/dph](http://www.mass.gov/dph) for further details and updates.

Based on the early and sustained presence of EEE in the area, the risk level has been raised from “High” to “Critical” in Easton, Raynham, Taunton, and West Bridgewater; and from “Moderate” to “High” in Bridgewater and Norton.

“It’s extremely important that residents in these communities take immediate steps to protect themselves and their families from mosquito bites,” said DPH Commissioner John Auerbach. “Avoid outdoor activities at dusk and nighttime when mosquitoes are at their most active, use insect repellent, and cover exposed skin.”

State officials conducted an initial round of aerial spraying in late July, which resulted in a 60% decline in the mosquito population in the areas that were sprayed.

“While we saw a significant reduction in mosquitoes following the July aerial spraying, we are still concerned about the high levels of EEE that pose a public health threat to residents in

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Southeastern Massachusetts,” said Department of Agricultural Resources Commissioner Gregory Watson. “We are continuing to work at the local and state level to employ the tools available to us to further knock down the mosquito population.”

In the meantime, local mosquito control projects will continue to conduct enhanced mosquito sampling in the coming days and have already increased ground spraying activities.

There have been no human cases of West Nile virus (WNV) or EEE so far this year. There were two cases of EEE in August of last year acquired in Massachusetts; a fatal case in a Bristol County man and an infection in a tourist from out of state. EEE activity in both 2010 and 2011 raised public concern and prompted DPH to work with a panel of experts to evaluate and enhance the state’s surveillance and response program. EEE is spread to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. EEE is a serious disease in all ages and can even cause death.

People have an important role to play in protecting themselves and their loved ones from illnesses caused by mosquitoes.

### **Avoid Mosquito Bites**

Apply Insect Repellent when Outdoors. Use a repellent with DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] or IR3535 according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age.

Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours. The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning.

Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites. Wearing long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin.

### **Mosquito-Proof Your Home**

Drain Standing Water. Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by either draining or discarding items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty any unused flowerpots and wading pools, and change water in birdbaths frequently.

Install or Repair Screens. Keep mosquitoes outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.

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**Protect Your Animals**

Animal owners should reduce potential mosquito breeding sites on their property by eliminating standing water from containers such as buckets, tires, and wading pools – especially after heavy rains. Water troughs provide excellent mosquito breeding habitats and should be flushed out at least once a week during the summer months to reduce mosquitoes near paddock areas. Horse owners should keep horses in indoor stalls at night to reduce their risk of exposure to mosquitoes. If an animal is diagnosed with WNV or EEE, owners are required to report to DAR, Division of Animal Health by calling 617-626-1795 and to the Department of Public Health (DPH) by calling 617-983-6800.

More information, including all WNV and EEE positive results from 2012, can be found on the Arbovirus Surveillance Information web page at [www.mass.gov/dph/wnv](http://www.mass.gov/dph/wnv) or by calling the DPH Epidemiology Program at 617-983-6800. The findings of the DPH Eastern Equine Encephalitis Expert Panel can be found [here](#).

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