

## Stephen J. Puleo

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**From:** Dmitry Lapin <dmitry@dmitrylapin.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 8, 2026 12:00 PM  
**To:** Planning Board  
**Subject:** Public Comment – Highland Cliff Estates Subdivision (#26-10)

Members of the Planning Board: I am a Windham resident and property owner who lives approximately one mile from the proposed Highland Cliff Estates subdivision. I only became aware earlier today, June 8, 2026, that this matter was scheduled for disc

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Members of the Planning Board:

I am a Windham resident and property owner who lives approximately one mile from the proposed Highland Cliff Estates subdivision. I only became aware earlier today, June 8, 2026, that this matter was scheduled for discussion at tonight's Planning Board meeting. As a result, I have not had sufficient time to conduct a comprehensive review of the application materials or supporting documents. Unfortunately, I am also unable to attend tonight's meeting in person. Nevertheless, after reviewing portions of the application and the Planning Department memorandum, I wanted to share several concerns and observations for the Board's consideration. I appreciate the opportunity to submit these written comments.

### Traffic Impact Analysis Waiver

I urge the Board to deny the requested waiver of the Traffic Impact Analysis requirement.

Based on my review of the Planning Department memorandum, my understanding is that the proposed subdivision is expected to generate approximately 255 daily vehicle trips. This exceeds the threshold established by the ordinance for requiring a traffic study.

Highland Cliff Road serves existing residences, agricultural uses, and recreational users. In particular, Bumbleroot Organic Farm generates regular traffic associated with Wednesday CSA pickups, weekend farm stand operations, and seasonal events. In addition, many residents walk, run, bicycle, and push strollers along Highland Cliff Road despite the absence of sidewalks or dedicated pedestrian infrastructure.

A traffic study would provide objective information regarding vehicle volumes, speeds, sight distances, pedestrian safety, school bus operations, and the impacts of both construction traffic and full project buildout. Given the scale of the proposed development, I do not believe this information should be waived.

Granting the requested waiver would leave the Board, neighboring residents, and Town staff without objective information regarding the traffic impacts of a development projected to generate approximately 255 daily vehicle trips. Without a traffic study, the Board will be asked to evaluate issues such as roadway capacity, sight distances, pedestrian safety, school bus operations, emergency vehicle access, and construction traffic based largely on assumptions rather than data.

The consequence is not merely the absence of a report; it is the absence of information needed to determine whether roadway improvements, traffic-control measures, or other mitigation may be necessary. Once the

subdivision is approved and constructed, any unforeseen traffic or safety issues may be difficult and costly to address. Requiring the study now allows those issues to be identified and evaluated before decisions are made rather than after impacts are already being experienced by the community.

This is particularly important on Highland Cliff Road, which serves residential properties, agricultural operations, and regular pedestrian activity despite the absence of sidewalks or dedicated pedestrian infrastructure.

#### High Intensity Soil Survey Waiver

I also urge the Board to deny the requested waiver of the High Intensity Soil Survey requirement.

As I understand the proposal, the subdivision will rely upon individual wells and septic systems for each lot. A detailed understanding of site soils appears critical to evaluating septic suitability, stormwater management, groundwater protection, and overall site suitability for development.

To my understanding, soil conditions directly affect the land's ability to safely support septic systems, manage stormwater runoff, recharge groundwater, and prevent erosion. A high-intensity soil survey may identify limitations that are not apparent from a more generalized review of site conditions.

The consequences of approving the waiver may not become apparent until after construction begins or homes are occupied. Inadequate understanding of site soils can lead to septic system failures, drainage problems, increased runoff onto neighboring properties, groundwater impacts, costly redesigns, or the need for additional mitigation measures that the review process could have identified earlier.

As a homeowner in a newer Windham subdivision, I learned during construction that actual site conditions can differ substantially from generalized assumptions. Unanticipated groundwater and drainage conditions required significant design changes and additional expense. While every property is different, that experience reinforced for me the importance of obtaining detailed site-specific information before development proceeds, rather than discovering limitations after lots are approved and construction is underway.

Given the project's scale and reliance on individual wells and septic systems, a complete soil evaluation is not an unnecessary burden but rather a fundamental component of determining whether the site is suitable for the proposed level of development.

#### Open Space Waiver

The applicant is also requesting a reduction in the amount of open space required under the conservation subdivision standards.

Based on my review of the materials, the project is proposed as a conservation subdivision. If the Board is inclined to consider this waiver, I respectfully request that the applicant be required to clearly demonstrate why compliance with the ordinance is impracticable and what public benefit will result from the reduction in required open space.

Because the project is proposed as a conservation subdivision, preservation of open space appears to be one of the primary public benefits associated with the development.

#### Additional Groundwater Concerns

Finally, I encourage the Board to carefully evaluate groundwater impacts, including water quantity in addition to water quality. While I am not a hydrologist, Southern Maine has experienced drought conditions during recent summers, and my understanding is that the project proposes 27 new private wells.

To my understanding, neighboring agricultural operations depend upon reliable groundwater resources for continued farming activities. For that reason, I respectfully request that any hydrogeologic review address cumulative groundwater withdrawals and potential impacts on surrounding properties and agricultural uses.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these comments.

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Sincerely,

Dmitry Lapin, Esq.

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