

Lake Hayward Dam Repairs – Important Update and Next Steps

Dear Neighbors and Members,

I hope this message finds you well. I'm writing to share an important update about the Lake Hayward Dam repair project — including where we stand, what's changed, and what lies ahead.

What We've Learned

As you know, our dam was evaluated in a 2019 engineering report that identified specific repairs needed to meet Connecticut DEEP (Department of Energy and Environmental Protection) dam safety requirements. In February 2024, the POALH applied for the required DEEP permit to complete those repairs. On October 5, 2025, that permit was officially granted and signed.

Until recently, many of us believed that the membership would be able to vote on whether the repairs — and any associated assessment — would move forward. That belief was shared in good faith, but we have since learned it was incorrect.

Under Connecticut General Statute §22a-402, dam owners are legally obligated to maintain dams in a safe condition and to perform any work ordered or permitted by DEEP. Noncompliance can result in daily fines of up to \$1,000, loss of insurance coverage, and DEEP stepping in to complete the work at double the cost.

This means the repairs are **not optional**. They are required by law, and we must move forward to remain compliant.

In addition, our **insurance provider** — the only company currently willing to cover the dam — requires that we comply with the DEEP report and provide regular updates on our progress. **Failure to comply could result in loss of coverage**, which would put both the dam and our community at significant risk.

Funding and the Special Assessment

At present, we have **\$166,000** already allocated or reserved for the project. These funds come from:

- **A Town of East Haddam contribution** – \$108,000
- **Monies previously approved by the membership** for dam repair, permitting, and contractor bidding – approximately \$33,000
- **Funds from the East Shore** – approximately \$25,000, accumulated over the past several years and reserved for dam-related purposes

Before any Special Assessment is considered, we will first **present our case to the Town of East Haddam Board of Finance** to request that the currently allocated funding be released and to **seek additional financial support**.

A **Special Assessment will not be determined or implemented** until:

1. A **definitive contractor bid** has been selected and all project costs are known; and
2. The **Board of Finance has been approached** and their decision received.

We are also **actively pursuing additional funding** from other organizations, with the **support of First Selectman Irene Haines** and our legislative representatives.

Once bids are received and reviewed, and funding sources clarified, the Board will consider whether a portion of our reserves can be applied to offset any remaining balance.

The Special Assessment, when implemented, will be a **flat fee** — this project is for **Dam Repair only** and is **not part of the General Operating Tax**. The East Shore homes will be asked to contribute the same **flat fee** as the POALH membership.

Project Scope and Timeline

The repair project is anticipated to begin in **September 2026**, pending contractor selection, weather conditions, and coordination with DEEP.

This is by far the largest infrastructure project our community has ever undertaken, and frankly, we've been learning as we go. There is no single manual for a project of this size at Lake Hayward, and the process has required patience and careful compliance with both state law and our POALH By-Laws.

Membership Communication

Per our By-Laws, no membership meetings may be held between October 1 and April 1. To keep everyone informed during that time, all relevant information — including the DEEP permit, the 2019 engineering report, and future cost and funding updates — will be posted on our POALH website for members to review at any time. We will also utilize Constant Contact for email blasts.

If you are not already receiving our email updates, please contact the **Vice President at VicePresident@LakeHaywardCT.com** to be added to our distribution list.

If you have questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to any Board member directly. We will continue to communicate clearly and promptly as new information becomes available.

A Note from the Board

We understand this news is difficult and that it differs from what many of us initially believed. Everyone involved — including those who have shared updates in meetings — has done so in good faith based on the information available at the time. Unfortunately, the process has revealed new requirements along the way, and we're adapting to them as responsibly as we can.

Our collective goal remains the same: to protect the **safety, integrity, and value of Lake Hayward**. We are committed to transparency, fiscal responsibility, and open communication throughout this process.

Thank you for your patience, understanding, and continued support as we move forward together.

Warm regards,
Laurie Dworak
President, POALH Board of Governors
President@LakeHaywardCT.com
Lake Hayward Special Taxing District

Lake Hayward Dam Repair – Questions & Answers

Q1. Why are these dam repairs required?

The repairs stem from the 2019 Engineering Report and are required by DEEP under Connecticut General Statute §22a-402. Noncompliance could result in daily fines, loss of insurance, or DEEP completing the work and charging the POALH twice the cost.

Q2. I thought we were going to vote on whether to do the repairs. Why can't we?

We now know that the repairs are mandated by DEEP and not optional. Earlier communication suggesting a vote was made in good faith but was based on incomplete information.

Q3. What are the consequences if we do not complete the work?

Potential daily fines up to \$1,000, loss of insurance, and DEEP may complete the work at double cost to the POALH.

Q4. How much will this cost, and do we already have funds?

We currently have **\$166,000** secured from the Town of East Haddam (\$108,000), **past membership approvals (\$33,000)**, and approximately **\$25,000 from the East Shore**.

Before any Special Assessment is considered, the Board will first wait until a definitive contractor bid is selected to determine any final cost and present to the Town of East Haddam Board of Finance to request additional funding. We will also exhaust any and all resources to assist with funding.

Q5. Will reserves be used?

The Board will consider offsetting part of the Special Assessment with reserve funds once the total project cost is confirmed.

Q6. When will construction begin?

Work is anticipated to begin in **September 2026**, following bid reviews, DEEP coordination, and scheduling.

Q7. Why no informational meeting this winter?

Our By-Laws prohibit membership meetings between October 1 and April 1. Instead, all relevant documents and updates will be available on our POALH website.

We will also use Constant Contact for email updates — to be added to the list, email **VicePresident@LakeHaywardCT.com**.

Q8. Who can I contact with questions?

Members are encouraged to contact any Board member directly or through the POALH website for clarification or access to documentation.

Q9. How is the Board approaching this project?

This is the largest project we've ever undertaken. We've learned a great deal throughout the process and remain committed to handling it transparently, responsibly, and with fairness to all members.