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For its 45 years of existence, the Association to Preserve Cape Cod (APCC), the Cape's leading region-wide nonprofit environmental advocacy and education organization, has been guided by its mission to "foster policies and programs that promote the preservation of the natural resources of Cape Cod through scientific, educational, and civic activities."

Driven by this mission, APCC has participated in every step of the regulatory review of Cape Wind since the project was first proposed in 2001.

We focused on two primary goals:

- 1) A comprehensive process must be created by regulators to guide development of all offshore renewable energy, not just Cape Wind.
- 2) The process that is created should include a rigorous evaluation of the risks posed by the Cape Wind project.

The latter would allow a fair and scientifically defensible conclusion about whether the Cape Wind project posed a risk to the Cape Cod environment.

In January 2009, the Minerals Management Service (MMS) released its Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) on the proposed wind farm. After review of this document, and the several drafts that preceded it, the board of directors and staff of APCC concluded that the EIS is comprehensive and fair and that its conclusions are essentially sound and scientifically justified. We found the potential environmental effects on habitats and species from the proposed construction, operation, and decommissioning of this wind farm to be acceptable.

We do not conclude that there will be no environmental impacts from this project. But it is our judgment that the benefits of increasing the local production of renewable energy will outweigh any environmental harm and the perceived threat to our region's character.

This conclusion is supported by a steady stream of new scientific evidence that indicates climate change is occurring even more rapidly than previously predicted. Recent studies predict a one to two foot rise in sea level, with a possible rise as much as six feet, in the northeast by the year 2100. Cape Cod is a one of the global hot spots for sea level rise.

Due to our geographic location, Cape Cod will be among those areas first affected by rising sea levels. Climate change and sea level rise represent a serious threat to our

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coastal towns, their natural resources and physical structures.

The migratory seabirds that winter in Nantucket Sound, which were the subject of much study regarding the potential for being adversely impacted by the Cape Wind project, will be among the animal species most threatened by a rapidly warming Arctic. Based on multi-year data collection, Mass Audubon and other ornithologists have concluded that Cape Wind will have a minimal impact on these birds. However, significant changes in their Arctic summer breeding habitat due to global warming would have serious consequences for these same bird species.

There are no simple or quick solutions to this global crisis. Instead, resolving this critical problem will require making many hard choices, and implementing a multitude of large and small solutions over many decades in many places. Although Cape Wind's direct contribution to reducing climate change will be small and hard to detect, allowing Cape Wind to proceed sets an example for making many other hard choices.

The time is overdue for the country as a whole, and the northeast in particular, to begin in earnest to develop widespread alternatives to the use of fossil fuels. Burning carbon is at the core of a host of environmental challenges, including global warming, ocean acidification and water quality degradation. Wind energy is among the most developed of those alternative technologies, and arguably the most suited to Cape Cod. While Nantucket Sound may not have been our first choice as a project site, we have to start somewhere.

There is still much work to be done. APCC believes that an independent scientific advisory board must be created to watch over Cape Wind to make sure that any environmental concerns are promptly addressed during all stages of project development, operation, and decommissioning. APCC is committed to continuing its own close monitoring of the project to ensure that the highest standards of environmental protection are adopted and followed throughout the life of this project.

We are all part of the problem. The question is, what are we willing to do to solve the problem?