



October 1, 2015

The Honorable Brian Dempsey, Chair
House Committee on Ways and Means
Room 243
State House
Boston, MA 02133

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RE: An Act Providing for the Establishment of a Comprehensive Adaptation Management Plan in Response to Climate Change (S1979)

Dear Chairman Dempsey:

The Association to Preserve Cape Cod (APCC) writes in strong support of S1979, An Act Providing for the Establishment of a Comprehensive Adaptation Management Plan in Response to Climate Change (CAMP). We urge the House Committee on Ways and Means to act swiftly in releasing this bill for a vote by the full House of Representatives.

Founded in 1968, APCC is the Cape Cod region's leading nonprofit environmental advocacy and education organization. Representing more than 5,000 members, APCC's mission is to promote policies and programs that protect and enhance the Cape's natural resources. APCC focuses its efforts on the protection of groundwater, surface water and wetland resources, the preservation of open space, the promotion of responsible, planned growth, and the achievement of an environmental ethic.

Cape Cod has some of the greatest expanses of shoreline in Massachusetts, all of which are vulnerable to increased coastal erosion, flooding from coastal storms and other impacts attributed to sea level rise and a changing climate. Rising sea levels will affect the Cape's water table, creating the threat of water supply well contamination from salinization and causing septic systems to flood. Projected sea level rise and an increase in the frequency and severity of storms place private property and public infrastructure at greater risk. Many of the Cape's diverse and globally significant ecological habitats face uncertain futures due to seawater inundation, rising temperatures and other changing climatic conditions.

Adverse impacts from climate change on Cape Cod's environment and economy are being seen now and will only get worse. A recent study from the Wood Hole Oceanographic Institution found that warmer ocean temperatures during certain periods in the first millennium were responsible for frequent occurrences of monster hurricanes along the U.S. coast. Based on those findings, the researchers warn that we should begin to plan for an increased occurrence of devastating category 3 hurricanes as our oceans continue to warm. The Cape Cod region, along with the rest of Massachusetts, must develop a comprehensive management plan to effectively meet the challenges of climate change.

The CAMP legislation would direct Massachusetts to develop and adopt a climate change

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management plan to ensure that the state's transportation, energy, communication, emergency response and public health systems are prepared for climate change and climate change-related emergencies. It would require that the state's natural resources, built environment and human populations be considered in an assessment of the state's vulnerabilities and in the development of a comprehensive preparedness plan. Without this due diligence required by CAMP, there is every chance that critical information that should guide future state planning would not be considered. For example, a groundwater modeling study of the mid-Cape Cod region conducted over the past two years by the U.S. Geological Survey and commissioned by our organization predicted significant impacts to in-ground infrastructure and the function of natural systems due to changes in the interface between salt water and the water table, based on expected sea level rise. Such analysis should be conducted for the entire Massachusetts coastal region.

The legislation would also establish a financial assistance program to help regional planning agencies implement CAMP, including development of adaptation strategies for each region of the state. And, CAMP would establish a voluntary acquisition program to purchase high risk coastal properties that repeatedly experience weather-related damage.

Massachusetts has been a national leader in promoting clean energy and establishing greenhouse gas emission reduction standards. But so far, we have lacked a comprehensive set of policies and strategies to better prepare our state, regional and local levels of government for the responsibility of protecting the people and resources of Massachusetts from severe weather events and other adverse effects of climate change. Adopting CAMP into law is the logical and necessary action that must be taken to ensure that we are prepared for what lies ahead.

APCC thanks the House Committee on Ways and Means for its thoughtful consideration of this important legislation and respectfully requests that the committee move CAMP forward this fall.

Sincerely,



Ed DeWitt
Executive Director



Don Keeran
Assistant Director

cc: Senator Marc Pacheco
Representative Frank Smizik
Senator Daniel Wolf
Senator Viriato deMacedo
Representative Timothy Madden
Representative Timothy Whelan
Representative Brian Mannal
Representative David Vieira
Representative Sarah Peake
Representative Randy Hunt