



December 7, 2021

Andrew Gottlieb
Executive Director

The Honorable Carolyn Dykema, House Chair
The Honorable Rebecca Rausch, Senate Chair
Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture
State House
Boston, MA 02133

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Eliza McClennen
President

Steven Koppel
Vice President

RE: Support for An Act Responding to the Threat of Invasive Species (H.999/S.563)

Bob Ciolek
Treasurer

Dear Chair Dykema and Chair Rausch:

Jack Looney
Clerk

The Association to Preserve Cape Cod (APCC) submits this written testimony in strong support of An Act Responding to the Threat of Invasive Species (H.999/S.563) and respectfully requests the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture to report this bill out with a favorable recommendation.

John Cumbler

Margo Fenn

Joshua Goldberg

DeeDee Holt

Thomas Huettner

Pat Hughes

Founded in 1968, APCC is the Cape region's leading nonprofit environmental advocacy and education organization, working for the adoption of laws, policies and programs that protect, preserve and restore Cape Cod's natural resources. APCC focuses our efforts on the protection of groundwater, surface water, and wetland resources, preservation of open space, the promotion of responsible, planned growth and the achievement of an environmental ethic.

Elysse Magnotto-Cleary

Blue Magruder

Stephen Mealy

Wendy Northcross

Kris Ramsay

Robert Summersgill

Charles Sumner

Taryn Wilson

Aquatic and terrestrial invasive species can seriously affect the function of natural ecosystems as well as cause adverse recreational and economic impacts. The Cape Cod region has wrestled with numerous invasive species for decades. Many of the Cape's salt marshes, which are vital to protecting coastal areas from flooding and storm-related damage, and which play an important role in filtering out pollutants before they reach coastal water bodies, have been adversely impacted by the invasive phragmites, which displace beneficial native salt marsh plant species that are vital to a healthy marsh system. The freshwater aquatic invasive hydrilla has gained a foothold in several Cape ponds, impacting recreational activities and burdening taxpayers with the cost to combat the infestations. On land, Asiatic bittersweet, Japanese knotweed, autumn olive, shrub honeysuckle, privet and porcelain berry have become common intruders in the region's forests, meadows and even neighborhoods, choking out native trees and shrubs and altering natural habitats. In breakout years, winter moth and gypsy moth caterpillars defoliate our forest canopies.

Left unattended and unmanaged, these and other invasive species can swiftly gain a firm foothold and become extremely difficult and expensive to remove. It is anticipated that climate change will generate even more threats from new invasive species showing up in our region. Successfully addressing invasive species requires monitoring and an immediate response at the first sign of a threat, yet obtaining guidance and the needed resources from the state's current disjointed programs can be difficult, confusing and, ultimately, ineffective.

H.999/S.563 would support and strengthen efforts to prevent and eradicate invasive species across the Commonwealth, thereby protecting and improving the natural function of ecosystems. The legislation would create a centralized office dedicated to controlling invasive species by combining existing state resources such as the Massachusetts Invasive Plant Advisory Group and the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Aquatic Invasive Management Plan. It would establish an Invasive Species Trust Fund that would provide grants for the eradication of invasive species to municipalities, groups of municipalities, nonprofit organizations and state agencies, provided that a state-approved management plan has been developed. The bill would also create a state coordinator position to provide assistance to municipalities for addressing invasives within the community, including assistance in identifying state and federal funding opportunities.

In reporting out this legislation, APCC urges the committee to ensure that language is included that supports programs that offer education about invasives prevention, in addition to the programs that support monitoring and eradication. It is always easier and more desirable to prevent invasives from being introduced in the first place than to remove them once they are established.

APCC thanks the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture for its consideration of this bill.

Sincerely,



Andrew Gottlieb
Executive Director

cc: Sen. Julian Cyr
 Sen. Susan Moran
 Rep. Sarah Peake
 Rep. Timothy Whelan
 Rep. Kip Diggs
 Rep. David Vieira
 Rep. Dylan Fernandes
 Rep. Steven Xiarhos