



Town of Chatham

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Monomoy Refuge Western Boundary Update August 2017

Congress was in recess almost all of August so there was no congressional action on HR 1157, Rep. Keating's bill designed to restore the historic western boundary of the Monomoy NWR. Nevertheless our efforts to build bipartisan support for the legislation continued and two very important events occurred during the month.

On August 4th Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Matthew Beaton and his Assistant Secretary Daniel Sieger visited the Town for a tour of the Refuge and the disputed western area. Accompanying Governor Baker's delegation on the tour were Selectmen Shareen Davis and Jeffrey Dykens, Town Manager Jill Goldsmith, Director of Natural Resources Robert Duncanson, Ph.D., and other key staff. Importantly State Representative Sarah Peake joined the tour. Rep. Peake has been one of Chatham's most vocal supporters. The trip was designed to demonstrate the importance and need for the Governor's active support for the legislation that would restore State ownership of 4,000 acres illegally taken by the FWS. The Town provided the Governor with a draft letter of support and based on the results of the tour, we believe the Commonwealth and the Governor are 100% behind the legislation. We have been advised that Secretary Beaton recommended to the Governor that he become engaged and that a support letter is on the Governor's desk.

The second important milestone was having Senator Markey's staff visit the Town and participate in a tour of the Refuge similar to the one taken by Secretary Beaton. Senator Markey's Chief of Staff Paul Tencher and his Boston office Regional Director for the Cape and Islands Ms. Rory Clark joined a delegation from the Town, which included among others Selectman Shareen Davis, Town Manager Jill Goldsmith, and Natural Resources Dir. Robert Duncanson, Ph.D., on the tour. Having Senator Markey's Chief of Staff personally involved is a tremendous accomplishment because he will now become personally involved.

We have been in follow-up contact with Chief of Staff Tencher who was very impressed by the Chatham presentation and is 100% on-board. Paul has instructed his staff to identify opportunities where Sen. Markey can use his position on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee to convince the Dept. of Interior to re-open the CCP and restore the historic western boundary. At this point Sen. Markey would prefer an administrative solution to the boundary conflict but if that is not successful we believe he will support legislation to do so.

Congress re-convenes next week and the next several months will be very hectic. Our primary goal continues to be getting HR 1157 approved by the House Natural Resources Committee and then the entire House. In that regard we will draft a letter for Rep. Keating to send to Chairman Bishop asking the Committee to approve HR 1147. We will include a copy of the Governor's letter to demonstrate the bi-partisan support for the bill. We will also meet with the Governor's Washington staff to identify opportunities for the Governor to personally contact Chairman Bishop when he visits DC.

The next couple of months are very important to the success of the legislation. We will need the support of Rep. Keating to move his bill out of the Natural Resources Committee. This may require another visit to DC by a Town delegation to solidify his active involvement. The Town may also re-connect with Rep. Niki Tsongas regarding her support of the bill now that she has announced her retirement. If a delegation from Chatham does come to DC we would plan on meeting with her again (especially if we have a Governor's letter).

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