



Town of Chatham

Office of the Selectmen
Town Manager
549 Main Street
Chatham, MA 02633



Jill R. Goldsmith
TOWN MANAGER

jgoldsmith@chatham-ma.gov

Tel: (508) 945-5105

Fax: (508) 945-3550

www.chatham-ma.gov

NEWS RELEASE

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Media Contact:

Jill R. Goldsmith, Town Manager

508-945-5105

jgoldsmith@chatham-ma.gov

CHATHAM, MA - Today the Town of Chatham officially requested Governor Charlie Baker intervene in the legislative initiative to restore the historic western boundary of the Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge.

In a demonstration of the importance of Governor Baker's active support for H.R. 1157, legislation introduced by Congressman William Keating that would re-establish the historic boundary, the Town submitted petitions endorsing his involvement. *"In a little over 2 weeks, more than 1000 individuals expressed their desire for the Governor's involvement"*, said Town Manager Jill Goldsmith. *"This incredible demonstration of support indicates the importance of this issue, not only to our community but to the broader Massachusetts fishing community"*, she continued. The Mayors of New Bedford and Gloucester (important fishing ports) expressed support for this effort highlighting the regional importance of this issue.

The western boundary dispute began in 2015 when the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) made an illegal administrative taking in their final Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Refuge. In that plan, the Service decided to take more than 3,000 acres of submerged lands west of Monomoy Island; land owned by the Commonwealth and sustainably managed with the Town for hundreds of years. To restore the historic western boundary Congressman William Keating introduced H.R. 1157 which makes clear that the western boundary of the Refuge is the mean low water line as described in the 1944 documents creating the Refuge. Because Republicans hold a majority in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, Governor Baker's engagement is seen as critical to the success of the legislation. *"We know the Governor is opposed to federal government overreach and supports fishing communities like Chatham so we expect he will actively support the legislation"*, said Chatham Board of Selectmen member, Shareen Davis.

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