April 29, 2019

Senator Anne M. Gobi, Senate Chair
Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture
Room 513
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Smitty Pignatelli, House Chair
Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture
Room 473F
State House
Boston, MA 02133

RE: Support for An Act Protecting the Natural Resources of the Commonwealth (S.459/H.732)

Dear Chair Gobi and Chair Pignatelli:

The Association to Preserve Cape Cod (APCC) expresses its strong support of An Act Protecting the Natural Resources of the Commonwealth (S.459, H.732), also known as the Public Lands Preservation Act (PLPA), and urges the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture to report the bill out with a favorable recommendation.

Founded in 1968, APCC is the Cape Cod region’s leading nonprofit environmental advocacy and education organization. Representing thousands of members on Cape Cod and across Massachusetts, 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.

Although Cape Cod is famed for its iconic scenic vistas and globally unique natural resource areas, efforts to preserve our natural habitats and open spaces have struggled to keep pace with the intense development that occurred in recent decades across the region. Today, only about 13 percent of the Cape remains undeveloped and unprotected. Ensuring that the Cape’s hard-earned land conservation achievements will not be eroded by future competing land use demands is a high environmental, economic and community
character priority for the region.

That is why adoption of the PLPA is critically important to Cape Cod, as it is to the rest of Massachusetts. The PLPA would set in place a process for replacing Article 97 land proposed for disposition with land of comparable natural resource value, acreage and location. This bill will help maintain a no-net-loss of these constitutionally protected Article 97 lands, which are preserved for the benefit of the public and dedicated for use as conservation, parks, forests, watersheds and other natural resource protection purposes. These lands serve a vital role in protecting wildlife habitat, keeping our water and air clean, providing recreational opportunities, promoting tourism, bolstering the state’s economy and improving the quality of life of our citizens.

APCC respectfully requests the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture to act swiftly in moving the PLPA forward through the legislative process.

Thank you for your consideration of this important bill.

Sincerely,

Andrew Gottlieb
Executive Director

Don Keeran
Assistant Director

cc: Senator James Eldridge
    Representative Ruth Balser
    Senator Julian Cyr
    Senator Viriato deMacedo
    Representative Sarah Peake
    Representative Timothy Whelan
    Representative William Crocker
    Representative David Vieira
    Representative Dylan Fernandes
    Representative Randy Hunt