



## RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING CAPE COD RIGHTS OF NATURE

Whereas, the communities of Cape Cod owe their centuries of existence to their natural setting: the miles of coastline, the natural aquifer, the climate-moderating Gulf Stream, the surface waters, and the abundance of the land and sea. From the earliest residents, the Wampanoag and Nauset, through today's, the Cape's people are deeply attached to this life- and spirit-sustaining land, understand their dependency upon the environment, and work collaboratively to protect it.

Whereas, despite these efforts, local terrestrial and aquatic species are in decline, and habitats are being fragmented and destroyed. The Cape's community of life is being destroyed. Residents mourn the loss and are united in their determination to stop it.

Whereas, the Massachusetts state constitution establishes in Article 97 that the people have a right to a clean and healthy environment, but that right is too often ignored or sacrificed to current political exigencies and societal needs. Consequently, the Cape's people are calling upon their local governments to recognize their constitutional right by better protecting the environment.

Whereas, in this time of global climate disruption and environmental collapse, the call for stronger environmental protection is world-wide; and one major response has been the mass adoption of legal enactments recognizing that humanity is a part of Nature, is responsible for Nature's care, and should recognize Nature -- the entire, inter-dependent community of life on Earth -- as having the right to exist, persist, regenerate, and be restored.

Whereas, this understanding of our human relationship to Nature, long shared by Earth's first peoples, has been incorporated into federal, state, and local laws around the world, including here on Cape Cod; and it is supported by a rapidly growing number of institutions, religious groups, and political leaders both locally and globally.

Whereas, supporting this movement and aligning local law and policy with the understanding that Nature must be respected as an entity with rights will help protect Cape Cod and will assist in effectuation of our constitutional right to a clean and healthy environment.

NOW, THEREFOR, THE SELECT BOARD OF FALMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS HEREBY:

RECOGNIZES the rights of Nature on Cape Cod; and

RESOLVES to effectuate those rights to the full extent of its authority in order to protect the welfare of life on Cape Cod and thereby effectuate our constitutionally guaranteed right to a clean and healthy environment and thereby protect our own and our children's and descendant's welfare.

Dated: April 22, 2024

Signed: Nancy Robbins Taylor  
Nancy Robbins Taylor, Chair  
Falmouth Select Board