



Towns asked to declare ‘climate change emergency’

Cape coalition seeks to add petition to spring meeting warrants across region

By Doug Fraser, *Cape Cod Times*, Feb. 25, 2020

Increasingly, town meeting voters are faced with petition articles asking how they stand on issues that go beyond town budgets and schools — national issues such as immigration, gun violence and plastics pollution. At annual gatherings this spring, voters will be asked about something of global import: whether they are willing, as a town, to declare a climate emergency and commit to reducing human-caused greenhouse gas emissions to zero.

“Cape Cod is one of the hot spots for climate change,” said Richard Delaney, who sits on the board of directors of the Global Ocean Forum and is president of the Center for Coastal Studies in Provincetown. [Read more here.](#)

Opinion

Cape voters: Take a stand on climate change

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It would be difficult to argue that there are many other places in the world with more at stake when it comes to climate change than coastal communities. In addition to having a front-row – and ever closer – seat to rising sea levels, oceanside towns and cities are also often more subject to the increasingly powerful storms and weather events associated with climate change than communities farther inland.

Cape Cod and the Islands, therefore, has much to lose should climate change continue unabated. This spring, voters across the Cape may have the opportunity to make their voices heard on the matter, as town meetings across the region consider a petition article that would, if enacted, declare a climate emergency and agree to reduce human-caused greenhouse gas emissions in their respective communities to zero. A coalition of groups has already submitted petition articles in 13 Cape towns and expects to finalize articles in Barnstable and Bourne by the end of the month.

The effort, spearheaded by the Cape Cod Climate Change Collaborative and 350 Cape Cod, brings together environmental, faith, science, and environmental leaders as part of a larger group called the Cape Cod Climate Emergency Initiative.

The group’s efforts to enhance understanding about climate change are as noble as they are timely. Studies indicate that the waters in our region are warming at a faster rate than virtually anywhere else in the world, and marine scientists warn that this dramatic change in water temperatures is having a negative impact on the native species we are accustomed to seeing off our shores. These shifts have both environmental and economic consequences that will likely become only more pronounced over time. [Read more here.](#)