



June 8, 2021

Cape Cod Commission
3225 Main Street
Barnstable, MA 02630

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL: climate@capecodcommission.org

Re: *Cape Cod Climate Change Collaborative Comments on Cape Cod Commission Draft Climate Action Plan*

Dear Members of the Commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Cape Cod Commission's draft Climate Action Plan ("Plan") for Cape Cod. On behalf of the Cape Cod Climate Change Collaborative ("Climate Collaborative"), I am pleased to submit these comments and recommendations.

First, a note of appreciation for the Commission's process in developing the Plan. We are impressed by the Commission's extensive research and outreach processes in developing the Plan. We appreciate its diligence in researching policy and planning models from across the country and bringing them to bear on our fragile peninsula. Similarly, the Commission's thorough and inclusive outreach and engagement efforts are reflected in the diversity of views and perspectives incorporated in the Plan. Many members of the Climate Collaborative and its constituent networks actively participated in the focus groups and listening sessions conducted as part of the Plan development process, an opportunity for which we are most appreciative.

Regarding Part 1 of the Plan, the Climate Collaborative appreciates the level of detail found in this section, which describes policy context, current scope of emissions, need for planning and engagement with various communities, and need for climate action. With facts and data now readily available, Climate Collaborative members and others advocating for strong climate change policies at the local level will have tools needed to make a compelling case for policies, programs, and personal changes to reduce carbon pollution and adopt clean energy solutions.

Part 2 of the Plan, which focuses on action strategies, implementation, recommendations, and performance measurement, also resonates positively with us. The Climate Collaborative believes the Plan's eleven prioritized strategies describing co-benefits that simultaneously address multiple issues is a smart approach. Given our organization's focus on climate mitigation, we are particularly pleased to see recommendations for reducing energy consumption, net zero building construction, clean and safe energy, electrification of transportation systems, and open space carbon sequestration, all of which are presented in detail.

We are especially impressed by the attention accorded open space protection and the roles played by forests, marshes, and soils in carbon sequestration. This mitigation strategy is too often given short shrift by others. Too, advocacy for the importance of siting large scale solar arrays in already disturbed areas and avoiding forest clear-cutting — extending the Commission's previous work in developing the Solar Siting Tool — is especially appreciated.

The Plan's recommendations section also contains useful guidance on effective implementation of the actions, referencing useful sources of funding, data collection, technical support, and continued engagement. Its final chapter on performance measurement points to the critical need to document changes over time — both positive and negative — that result from actions taken, or not taken, by all stakeholders referenced in the plan.

The Climate Collaborative offers several recommendations we believe would further strengthen the Plan, as follows:

- First, we recommend that more sustained attention be given the cross-cutting theme of climate equity in the Plan. As the term “equity” is sprinkled throughout the Plan rather than comprising a dedicated section, we recommend developing a specific section on equity where its various dimensions can be presented as an integrated whole, such as is reflected in the Commission's idea of an equity working group.
- Second, a greater sense of *urgency* should be expressed throughout the Plan, especially as it relates to the projected negative impacts of global warming on the Cape and Islands. The word ‘urgency’ occurs only twice in the Plan, in both cases tied to planning principles. The intensity of change required of all stakeholders to mitigate the climate crisis between now and 2030 is prodigious. The Plan would be stronger if it spoke more explicitly, forcefully, and comprehensively about the reality of the climate emergency and the urgent need for action.
- Finally, we note what feels to us like an omission: the lack of attention to battery storage of energy. Battery storage will play an increasingly important role in improving the reliability of access to electricity, in emergency locations on a large scale and as used by individuals and organizations for backup and in electric vehicles. We recommend that battery storage be given greater prominence as a resilience strategy in Chapter Seven.

The scope and breadth of the Plan's development and recommended action steps will assuredly move Cape Cod climate change planning forward by a substantial margin and provide a solid foundation upon which to base ongoing mitigation and adaptation efforts. The Climate Collaborative remains committed to working closely with the Commission and other partners to implement Climate Action Plan objectives as rapidly as possible.

Sincerely,

Richard F. Delaney

Richard F. Delaney
President, Board of Directors
Cape Cod Climate Change Collaborative