

104 5th St. N. E.  
Washington 2, D. C.  
March 18, 1961

Honorable Ernest Gruening  
Senate Office Building  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator Gruening:

As I told you the other day on the telephone, Provincetown at its annual town meeting last Monday voted No on the question:

Are you in favor of legislation by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts which will enable Provincetown to acquire a portion of the State-owned or controlled lands for expansion purposes of a non-commercial nature?

The vote was 144 to 61. The State has indicated its willingness to turn these lands over to the nation if a park is established. The town voted 147 to 5 in favor of a Cape Cod national park, but it voted against the Saltonstall-Smith bill and the proposal of Provincetown's Chief of Selectmen John Snow, both of which would exclude part of the Province Lands.

The approximately 400 acres that would be excluded from the park under the Saltonstall-Smith bill (Snow asked for 1600 acres) are a belt of woods and ponds that divide the sand dunes from the town. They are untouched and beautiful, and the Park Service regards them as an important feature of the park. The people of Provincetown neither need nor want them for development. They feel that development there would be injurious to the best interests of the town.

The Provincetown vote refutes the testimony put into the record by Selectman John Snow, the sole spokesman for Provincetown, who represented neither the voters nor the Board of Selectmen of Provincetown and was, in fact, not authorized to speak for the town at the recent hearing.

We therefore urge that the boundaries of the park as defined in the Saltonstall-Smith bill be revised to include all of the Province Lands. Our old friend Mary Vorse would join me in this. She has been fighting for the preservation of her beloved "back country."

Just a word about the other towns in the proposed park. After two years of working to promote the park and of talking to many people on the Cape about it, I know that there is a great deal of sentiment for a park encompassing an area at least as large as that proposed in the Saltonstall-Smith bill. Many people want to live within the park

The summer residents, who pay well over 50 percent of the taxes on the lower Cape, are generally in favor of a large park. The drastic cuts proposed by the selectmen of several of the towns are mainly supported by real estate interests. These interests have shown their contempt for the principle of conservation, and for Congress, by subdividing in the past year large tracts of land included in the park by the Saltonstall-Kennedy bill, in defiance of the retroactive provision in that bill. Any further cuts in the park will reward these people at the expense of the nation.

As Mr. Widdih pointed out at the hearings, many concessions have been made to the towns. It has been "all give and no take." Under the Saltonstall-Smith bill there is 18 percent less land in the park than was proposed originally. In addition, there will be 10 percent of private land within the park on which the towns can collect taxes.

We therefore urge that no further boundary concessions be made.

Very sincerely yours,

Miriam Haggood DeWitt

Washington Representative,  
Emergency Committee for the  
Preservation of the  
Province Lands

Copies to: Senator Anderson  
Senator Saltonstall  
Senator Smith  
Representative J. T. Rutherford  
Representative Gracie Pfost  
Representative Hastings Keith