

COPY

Provincetown, Mass.
September 11, 1961

The Board of Selectmen,
Provincetown, Mass.

Dear Sirs:

With this letter we respectfully ask you for information in regard to action your board may possibly intend as respects the state owned Province Lands. We would like to point out that as the seemingly inevitable commercialization of this town advances year by year, the Province Lands in their present natural state become more and more the greatest asset left to the town.

You will recall that in the Annual Town Meeting on March 13, 1961, the citizens, by very large majorities, voted down all of several measures to restrict the Cape Cod National Park by keeping back for commercial exploitation important areas of the Province Lands. You will recollect that members of your board stated before the Annual Meeting that the vote of the citizens would be complied with by the Selectmen. This was affirmed again in the meeting itself by the Chairman of your board. And, indeed, immediately after the Annual Meeting your Chairman withdrew the plea he had earlier made to have the Congress exclude large sections of the Province Lands from the National Park. Following this, as you know, the Congress passed, on August 7, 1961, a final bill which included all of the Province Lands within the Park.

Despite this vote and the protestations by town officials that they would abide by it, and despite the recent act of the National Congress establishing a Cape Cod Park, we find the Chairman of Selectmen, in an interview with a reporter for the New York Times, saying on August 14, 1961, that the Provincetown Selectmen will petition the Massachusetts General Court to withhold an area of the Province Lands from the National Park, such area to be turned over to Provincetown interests to provide accommodations for park visitors. This would appear to put us back where we were a year ago, and faced with a proposition involving motels, hotels, trailer camps and filling stations in the Province Lands.

This new attempt to exploit the unspoiled Province Lands has been reported at some length in conversations with the Town Manager. Apparently this is to be tried in a special Town Meeting, where a low attendance is usually expected. We note also certain statements looking toward a curtailment of the National Park in the Province Lands area by Mr. Van Ness Bates in the Cape Cod Standard Times at about the same time that statements along a similar line were being made to the New York Times by the Chairman of Provincetown Selectmen.

In view of the above, we ask your board to say frankly whether it intends to disregard the vote at the Annual Town Meeting and to reopen the Province Lands controversy? We believe most of the citizens of this town had hoped that this matter had been settled once and for all. If it is your intention to start this all over again, we would like to know...and as citizens we consider it our right to know...the location and extent of the Province Lands the board expects to ask for, together with the conditions governing the control, disposal and use of the area involved.

In respect to the last you may recollect that last winter were long kept in ignorance of a report issued December 23, 1961, and authorized by the General Court. This report, when it finally had to be brought out in the open, on March 7, 1961, as you know, provided that the control and disposal of 1476 acres of the Province Lands would be placed completely in the hands of the Chairman of Selectmen, the Chairman of the Planning Board, and the Director of the Division of Waterways.

We would like to make clear that in this letter we are not alluding to the proposed \$650,000 marina, to be constructed, according to the Town Manager, at the joint expense of the Town and the State. We are at this time referring to land entirely over and above the 58 acres required for a marina.

We will appreciate a prompt reply to our letter.

Sincerely yours,

Ross Moffett
Charles A. Mayo, Jr.
For the

Emergency Committee for the
Preservation of the Province Lands