

January 31, 1962
Provincetown, Mass.

Rep. Francis W. Perry
House of Representatives
State House
Boston, Mass.

Dear Representative Perry,

I have just received your letter of the 29th and I am taking this opportunity to answer it immediately. You deserve a prompt explanation of our position on the Provincetown Marina in view of the statement we presented to the Committee on Harbors and Public Lands, Jan. 25, on the hearing relative to House Bill #2686 and in view of our previous firmly established position in this matter. I will attempt to explain our stand as best I can and at the same time give you a brief resume of our efforts to forestall this marina. I can only say that until the last minute, our position was identical to yours, and, in basis of fact, still is. The enclosed flyer sent to the stronger members of our committee and prepared on the weekend of the 21st of January, soliciting testimony to be sent to the Committee will testify to this fact.

On the 23rd of January, twenty-four hours before our statement had to be ready for the hearing, we received a copy of #R2686, and it was not exactly as we thought it was going to be written. Through Mr. Child, the Governor's appointee to the Park Commission, we were convinced, as was he himself, that this Bill, if passed as written, would relatively insure that a marina would never be built at the West End breakwater. His reasoning, and subsequently ours, was to the effect that if the land were not ceded to the Town and if the cost of the marina were to be completely undertaken by the State, then the eventual result would be that the marina would never be built because it would be far too costly and the State would drop it. This line of thought was reportedly supported by sources close to the Governor's office and it was somewhat hinted to us that it may even have had his sanction. Our recommendation that the land be turned back to the National Park in such an event would insure that this land eventually would return to its proper place and new negotiations and objective action could then be started for a true Harbor of Refuge in Provincetown. At the last moment, as I have stated, we were hopeful that this might be the lesser of two evils and we probably succumbed to what is commonly referred to as political expediency. I do not expect that you will understand this completely. It seems now, even to us, that this was circuitous thinking and too equivocal in a situation which is and was clearly a "sweetheart deal." We hoped for a way out, however, since, as you saw, there was not the slightest chance that the pressures being brought to bear in this matter by the citizens, largely fishermen, the town officials and Bossette added up to anything but passage of a bill to create a marina in the West End of Provincetown.

I should point out to you that we made our first strong efforts to stop this marina last July 10th at the Special Town Meeting. There, several persons pointed out the "sweetheart" nature of this marina, laying the blame squarely where you have put it. There was not an eye batted by anyone. All

the fishermen and citizens of Provincetown knew what Mr. Sessette represents and knew that it is a "sweetheart deal" and the plain truth is they don't care. Their attitude is that they are going to get that marina anyway, regardless of what it entails. They have been kept waiting many many years for some scrap of aid and now they see this in their hand and they refuse to be put off any longer. Everyone here agrees with us and few will take a step to stop the fraud because the emotional tenure of the fishing fleet is beyond approach on a rational basis at this time. Added to this, the matter of race has been brought in and a widespread appeal is being made to all the Portuguese in this area to vouch for the marina. The logic being used against us here being that all who are against the marina are against the Portuguese fishermen.

A further contribution to our discouragement came from the lack of action by the Park Service itself. I am sure there is an explanation for this but their firm opposition would have helped. We had hoped as well for some information by the government in some connection that would hold out hope for a marina within the reasonable future. None has been forthcoming of any consequence except that it is not an impossibility. You will see by this that the situation has gone beyond the state of reason and will not be stopped here unless a miracle occurs.

I wish to state that I am lengthy in my explanation, not by any way of apology for our action, but simple to inform you as best I can of the factors leading up to our decision. If we were wrong, and I personally feel that we were after the story of the hearing was related to our committee and after thorough retrospection on this whole business, then we must accept the blame. At a meeting of our committee recently, the general feeling was that a retraction at this point would not help the cause and perhaps weaken our future actions. Mr. Child is still of the firm belief that his original analysis of the Bill and its consequences is correct. He is a man of high principle, intelligence, and unquestioned integrity. I am enclosing two letters from the local press which he has written on the matter of the marina. You will see that he has a keen insight and that his factual analyses are well-grounded.

At the same time that we received the discouraging news of the hearing on #H2656, we also learned that Mr. Van Ness Bates is making another attempt on the Province Lands with a bill to cut out some 900 acres. Although we believe his attempt will be exposed for what it is, a private investment grab at the last minute, we shall spare no pains in fighting it. Either Mr. Moffett or myself or both of us will testify at that hearing. Mr. Allan Jones is forwarding us a copy of this bill together with the information necessary for the preparation of opposition. I must say, in this connection, that we are very worried about the Governor's lack of action in following up his declared intention to transfer the Province Lands to the National Seashore. It seems to us that any further delay will be disastrous.

In closing, I would like to say, that we have the greatest respect for what you have done and what you stand for. We entirely sympathize with the difficulty of the role you have assumed in the Legislature. Both Mr. Moffett and myself would like to express our regret for what may have seemed to you a desertion of your person and principles. I sincerely hope that this letter will remove any doubt in your mind as to our steadfast support.

Very Sincerely,