

“Resolution to Oppose Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration and Extraction Activities including Seismic Airgun Blasting and to Oppose any Weakening of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (1972)”

WHEREAS, the Nantucket National Historic Landmark District is the largest conventional National Historic Landmark District by area in the contiguous United States; and

WHEREAS, the Nantucket Historic Landmark District encompasses the adjoining islands of Tuckernuck and Muskeget; and

WHEREAS, Nantucket is a uniquely preserved New England seaport, largely developed during the late 18th and early 19th centuries with over 800 pre-Civil War homes (many linked to the Whaling Industry); and

WHEREAS, the US National Park Service cites Nantucket as being the “finest surviving architectural and environmental example of a late 18th, early 19th- century New England seaport town”; and

WHEREAS, the Nantucket Historic Landmark District strives to protect and preserve its Historic and Natural heritage; and

WHEREAS, Nantucket is one of the highest rated island destinations in the world; and

WHEREAS, the Nantucket Historic Landmark District includes 70 miles of shoreline, most of which is white sand beach; and

WHEREAS, the Nantucket Historic Landmark District is home to the largest remaining sand plain grasslands with an estimated 80 percent of the worldwide acreage of coastal sand plain grasslands occurring on Nantucket and Tuckernuck; and

WHEREAS, Nantucket’s shellfisheries are significant both locally and nationally; and

WHEREAS, commercial and recreational shellfishing are critical to the Island’s history, culture, and economy; and

WHEREAS, Nationally, the Island’s largest commercial shellfishery— the Nantucket bay scallop fishery—is one of the last wild-harvest bay scallop fisheries in the country; and

WHEREAS, the eelgrass in Nantucket is the life-giver, directly or indirectly, for much that lives in Nantucket’s harbors and estuaries including bay scallops; and

WHEREAS, water quality is essential to sustain eel grass health; and

WHEREAS, the latest figures provided by Nantucket show that tourism is the major economic driver; and

WHEREAS, Nantucket works very hard to maintain and expand its positive standing as a premiere ecotourism and residency destination; and

WHEREAS, Nantucket is home to numerous marine mammal populations including the critically endangered North Atlantic right whale; and

WHEREAS, the Nantucket Historic Landmark District is intent on becoming a World Whale Heritage Site; and

WHEREAS, the harmful impacts from offshore oil and gas drilling and exploration anywhere along the Atlantic coastline could extend far beyond the immediately surrounding areas and severely impact communities that rely on the robust economy provided by a healthy marine ecosystem; and

WHEREAS, offshore drilling and exploration perpetuates our ties to dirty carbon pollution and contributes to climate disruption and the resulting sea level rise and extreme weather; and


WHEREAS, seismic airgun blasting to explore for oil and gas deposits has been proven to disrupt and displace marine life, from 'critically endangered' North Atlantic right whales to the zooplankton they eat; and

WHEREAS, the Town, County and National Historic Landmark District of Nantucket recognizes that our community, businesses, and industries depend on a healthy coastal environment for the benefit of current and future residents, property owners and visitors alike;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town, County and National Historic Landmark District of Nantucket, through Town Selectmen Resolution oppose oil and gas extraction and exploration activities of any kind, including fracking and well stimulation and Seismic Airgun blasting in federal and state waters off the Atlantic Coast of the United States and/or any attempts to weaken the authorization provisions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act 1972, to allow for such activities.

There should be no new federal oil and gas leases in the Pacific, Atlantic or Arctic Oceans or the eastern Gulf of Mexico — areas currently protected from new leases.

Signed this 7th day of February, 2018.


Dawn Hill Holdgate, Chairman


Matt Fee, Vice Chairman


Jason Bridges


Rita Higgins


James R. Kelly