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Speaker
Barnstable County of the House of Delegates

Dear Barnstable County Officers

This letter is written by a vote of the Provincetown Board of Selectmen and the Chair of the Provincetown Finance Committee

The County has just completed its annual budget cycle. Yet like almost every government entity in Massachusetts, Barnstable County is facing a coming fiscal crisis in the form of unfunded liabilities for retiree health care. However both the House of Delegates and County Commissioners seem to be missing an opportunity to address the county's looming unpaid retiree health bill.

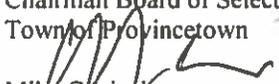
Over the recent weeks we have all read the headlines of a tussle between the Barnstable House of Delegates and county commissioners over some \$75,000 related to the MIS budget. That's small money. As an example "fringe" benefits for the delegates alone are twice that amount. If the MIS budget issue is but half delegate's health insurance line item in the budget, the unpaid bill for retiree health care is \$30,000,000. That's more than twice the County's annual budget. And rather than paying down this huge bill, the County's auditors report our OPEB liability actually grew in FY13 by some \$800,000. This is very bad news.

While the County has set up a special trust account to pay for these retiree health benefits, it has not provided any funds nor a plan to reducing this liability with the exception of the Cape Light Compact which appropriated its full share of the OPEB liability in its self-funded FY-15 budget.

So while the headlines report arguments about small budget line items, our County Officials are missing the forest for the trees. It's time to develop a fiscally responsible plan to address the extraordinary burden of retiree health care costs and develop a funding strategy that puts the County taxpayers out of jeopardy.

Respectfully,


Tom Donegan
Chairman Board of Selectmen
Town of Provincetown


Mike Canizales
Chair, Finance Committee
Town of Provincetown

cc: Cape Cod Times

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Barnstable County Commissioners

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