

BARNSTABLE COUNTY

In the Year Two Thousand and Seventeen

PROPOSED RESOLUTION 17-08

Whereas, two species of herring (river and ocean) school together in waters surrounding Cape Cod, and

Whereas, herring are an intermediate “link” in the ocean’s web of life; they eat plankton and in turn serve as “forage fish” sought by larger ones like codfish, bluefish, striped bass, tuna and others, and

Whereas, river herring fisheries have been depleted causing the Commonwealth to prohibit the taking of a single herring from Cape Cod’s waterways, and

Whereas, large commercial fishing vessels called mid-water trawlers scoop millions of pounds of river herring unintentionally as they trawl for *ocean* herring, leaving the river herring dead, and

Whereas, mid-water trawlers may currently trawl as close as three miles from shore, and

Whereas, when these trawlers remove entire schools of herring from near-shore areas, cod, tuna and other large fish must move farther offshore to search for food, and

Whereas, the movement of the larger fish farther offshore disrupts the entire marine food-chain and leaves small-boat fishermen challenged to find sufficient catch, and

Whereas, this disruption due to herring depletion has environmental, economic and recreational fishing consequences, and

Whereas, a commercial trawling buffer zone could be implemented that would require mid-water trawlers to operate farther offshore, and

Whereas, the Cape Cod Commercial Fisherman’s Alliance and the Association to Preserve Cape Cod are advocating for implementation of a buffer zone, and

Whereas, there is historical precedent for such action; when foreign commercial fleets were decimating local fisheries in the 1960s and 1970s, the U.S. Congress passed the Magnuson-Stevens Act banning foreign fishing fleets from operating within 200 miles of the U.S. coast, and

Whereas, the New England Fishery Management Council is the regional council charged by Federal law with conserving and managing fishery resources from three to 200 miles off the coast of Massachusetts and the other New England states, and

Whereas, the Council is weighing implementation of a buffer zone and will take action on the matter in December 2017,

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Barnstable County Assembly of Delegates:

Supports the establishment of a Federally-designated buffer zone around Cape Cod that would prohibit mid-water trawlers from operating near the Cape's shores.

(Submitted by Brewster Delegate Mary Chaffee and Provincetown Delegate Brian O'Malley at a regular Assembly of Delegates meeting on November 1, 2017).