



On April 1st 2025

Descendants of Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson

delivered the following appeal to Governor Healey

signed by over 40 leading historians, scientists, and climate and environmental advocates

urging her to protect our national historic sites and the climate

from proposed private jet expansion

The Honorable Maura T. Healey April 1st, 2025 Governor of The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Massachusetts State House
24 Beacon Street, Room 280
Boston, MA 02133

Most men, it seems to me, do not care for Nature and would sell their share in all her beauty, as long as they may live... It is for the very reason that some do not care for those things that we need to combine to protect all from the vandalism of a few. -- Henry David Thoreau, 1861

Dear Governor Healey:

We, the undersigned, write with deep concern over the significant climate impacts that would result from implementing the private jet infrastructure expansion plan at Hanscom Field Civil Airport in Concord, Lexington, Bedford, and Lincoln Massachusetts. This development plan, proposed by Runway Realty Ventures LLC, also stands to pose irreparable harm to one of the most historically and ecologically significant areas in our country. We understand this 522,000 sq. ft. luxury private jet hangar project is one of the largest to be proposed in the United States.

As you are aware, private luxury jet travel is the most deleterious form of travel relative to the carbon footprint emitted per passenger. Infrastructure expansion plans to facilitate and further encourage the growth of private luxury jet travel, serving an extremely small population, is unnecessary and unwise given the dire need for immediate and drastic reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. A private jet can emit 7,500 tons of CO₂e per year, while an average global citizen emits 4.7 tons of CO₂e per year. Against the backdrop of rapid climate change that requires significant societal lifestyle modifications, *needless* expansion of private luxury jet infrastructure, to benefit the very few, should be discouraged and curtailed.

According to NASA's Goddard Institute of Space Studies, the summer of 2024 was the hottest on record. Unprecedented deadly heatwaves, floods, storms and wildfires have ensued globally; landscape and population ecology along with biodiversity already reflect tragic and irreversible impacts. The IPCC AR6 Climate Change 2023 Report warns: "There is a rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a livable and sustainable future for all... The choices and actions implemented in this decade will have impacts now and for thousands of years." The report goes on to state, "Effective climate action is enabled by political commitment."

Ironically, the site for this half-million square foot, environmentally irresponsible private jet expansion plan lies in close proximity to Henry David Thoreau's Walden Pond and Walden Woods, revered worldwide as the birthplace of the Environmental Movement and for Thoreau's prominent role in furthering the ideals of equality, social reform, and protecting our finite and vulnerable natural resources.

Bordering the Hanscom Airport is Minute Man National Historical Park that occupies a unique and sacred place in the birth of the nation, a 250-year history that Americans will celebrate in both 2025 and 2026. Minute Man National Park, Walden and their historic environs represent and reflect our nation's ability to prevail, evolve, and enlighten in the face of extreme challenge. Today, climate change poses the planet's most formidable and complex challenge, one that demands of us immediate and unequivocal action.

Sixty percent of all the private jets in the world are based in the United States. We recognize that certain circumstances require the use of private jet transportation. That said, our focus, at this time of a rapidly warming climate, is to reduce, not expand, infrastructure build-out that would encourage and incentivize unnecessary growth of private jet travel – especially when such build out would negatively impact one of our nation's most historic regions. At the same time that most of us consume energy generated from fossil fuels, we rightly advocate for the vigorous development of and aggressive conversion to low-carbon energy.

By halting this private jet infrastructure development plan at Hanscom Field Airport, you will inspire and encourage other elected officials and decision-makers to remain committed to act on effective climate actions -- actions the IPCC has stated are *essential* in order to preserve a livable planet for current and future generations.

In 1630, John Winthrop, then to be future governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony wrote: "The eyes of all people are upon us." Under your steadfast leadership, *with the eyes of the world upon us*, Massachusetts can meet the current challenges and set the example for wise, ethical, and sustainable transportation planning so critical to reaching our net zero climate goals by 2050.

Thank you for your thoughtful attention and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill McKibben'.

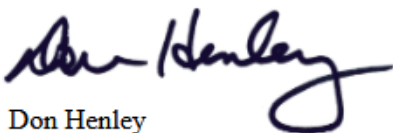
Bill McKibben
Environmentalist, Author, Founder 350.org

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Ken Burns'.

Ken Burns
Documentarian Filmmaker

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Solomon'.

Susan Solomon, Ph.D.
Co-Chair, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Noble Prize Climate Science
Reports (2007), Professor, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Don Henley'.

Don Henley
Founder, Walden Woods Project, Recording Artist



William R. Moomaw, Ph.D.

Professor Emeritus of International Environmental Policy - Fletcher School, Tufts University;
Distinguished Visiting Scientist Woodwell Climate Research Center; Co-founder, Global
Development and Environmental Institute; Lead Author Nobel Prize IPCC Climate Science
Reports (2007)

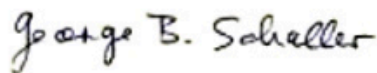


Douglas Brinkley, Ph.D.

Professor of History, Rice University; History Commentator CNN,
Presidential Historian, New York Historical Society

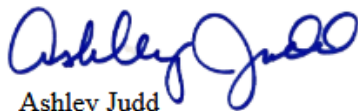


James Taylor
Recording Artist



George Beals Schaller, Ph.D.

Mammologist, Field Biologist, Conservationist, and Author; Vice President of Panthera
Corporation and Senior Conservationist, Wildlife Conservation Society; Recipient: National
Geographic Lifetime Achievement Award, Guggenheim Fellowship, World Wildlife Gold Medal

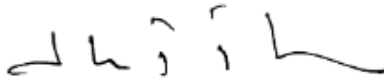


Ashley Judd

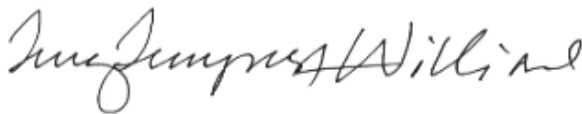
Goodwill Ambassador for the UN Population Fund
Actor, Author, and Activist



Sy Montgomery
Naturalist and Author



John DeVillars
Former N.E. Administrator U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Massachusetts Secretary of Environmental Affairs; Co-Founder and Chair Emeritus BlueWave Energy



Terry Tempest Williams
Author, Educator, Environmentalist; Harvard Divinity School writer-in-residence



David Gessner, Ph.D.
Nature and Environmental Author and Essayist; Professor of Creative Writing, University of North Carolina Wilmington

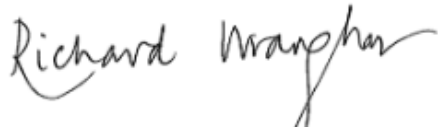


Michael E. Mann, Ph.D.
Climatologist and Geophysicist; Presidential Distinguished Professor of Earth and Environmental Science, University of Pennsylvania; Director, Penn Center for Science, Sustainability and the Media; Author



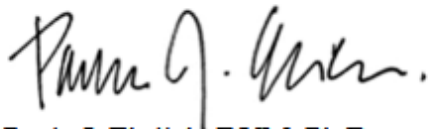
Roger Christie

Chairman of the Board Rachel Carson Council; grandnephew and adopted son of Rachel Carson



Richard Wrangham, Ph.D.

Anthropologist and Primatologist; Professor of Biological Anthropology, Harvard University;
Author



Paula J. Ehrlich, DVM, Ph.D.

President and CEO, E.O. Wilson Biodiversity Foundation; Co-Founder, Half Earth Project



The Reverend Dr. Jim Antal

Special Advisor on Climate Justice to the General Minister and President of the United Church
of Christ; Author *Climate Church*, *Climate World*



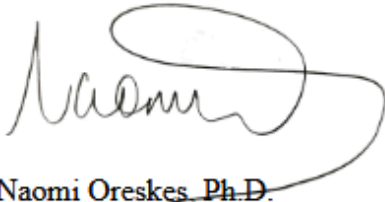
Jeff Corwin

Explorer and Naturalist

Executive Producer and Host: ABC's *Wildlife Nation*



Robert D. van der Hilst, Ph.D.
Professor of Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences
Massachusetts Institute of Technology



Naomi Oreskes, Ph.D.
Professor of History of Science and Affiliated Professor of Earth and Planetary Sciences
Harvard University
Geologist, Science Historian, and Author



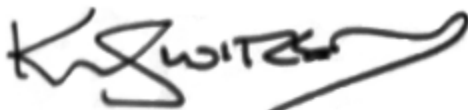
James Gutave Speth
Co-Founder, National Resources Defense Council
Chair, President Carter's Council on Environmental Quality
Former Dean, Yale School of Environment



Ed Begley, Jr.
Environmentalism, Actor, and Author



Abigail Disney
Documentary Film Director, Producer, and Screenwriter



Kathrine Switzer
American Marathon Runner, Journalist, and Author
Inductee: National Women's Hall of Fame



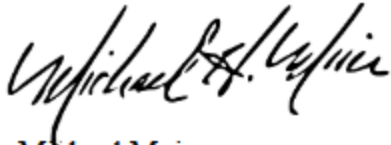
John J. Kucich, Ph.D.
English Professor, Interdisciplinary Learning and Research Initiative; Author
President, The Thoreau Society



Ellen Emerson
President, Ralph Waldo Emerson Memorial Association
Great-great granddaughter of Ralph Waldo Emerson



Mark Thoreau
Henry David Thoreau Family Descendant



Michael Muir
Founder/Executive Director Access Adventures, Inc.
Great-grandson of conservationist John Muir



J. Drew Lanham, Ph.D.
American Author, Poet, and Wildlife Biologist; MacArthur Fellowship 2022



Robert Thorson, Ph.D.
Professor of Earth Sciences, University of Connecticut
Author of *The Guide to Walden Pond*, *The Boatman: Henry David Thoreau's River Years*,
Walden's Shore, *Beyond Walden*

Sara Seager

Sara Seager, Ph.D.

Astrophysicist and Author; Professor of Physics, Aerospace Engineering, Planetary Science,
Aeronautics and Astronautics
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Dorie McCullough Lawson

Dorie McCullough Lawson

Author, Counselor

Daughter of Historian David McCullough

Lyle Lovett

Lyle Lovett

Recording Artist, Composer and Songwriter

Kristen Sykes

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Northeast Regional Director

NPCA National Parks Conservation Association



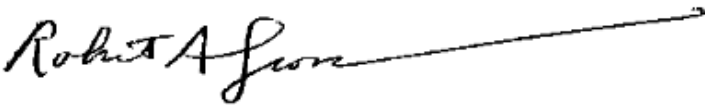
Paula Poundstone
Humorist, Author, NPR Commentator



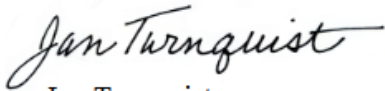
Gregory Maguire
American Novelist, Author of *Wicked*, and other novels for adults and children



Elizabeth Turnbull Henry
President, Environmental League of Massachusetts



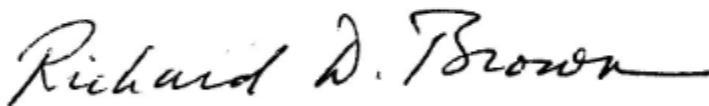
Robert A. Gross, Ph.D.
Professor of Early American History (*Emeritus*), University of Connecticut
Author of *The Minutemen and Their World* and *The Transcendentalists and Their World*



Jan Turnquist
Executive Director, Louisa May Alcott's Orchard House



Kathleen Fahey
Executive Director, Friends of Minute Man National Park



Richard D. Brown, Ph.D.
Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor of History (emeritus)
University of Connecticut; Author



David N. Duncan
President, American Battlefield Trust



John M. Fowler
Former Executive Director, National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

Nature... She pardons no mistakes. Her yea is yea, and her nay, nay.
Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1836