

Sponsored by: Save Our Heritage, The Walden Woods Project, National Parks Conservation Association, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation



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**PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUES, APRIL 1st at 10am – at the STATE HOUSE
24 Beacon Street, Boston**

**THOREAU & EMERSON DESCENDANTS, “LOUISA MAY ALCOTT,” & NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
TO DELIVER KEY LETTER & PETITION**

*urging Governor Healey to halt immense [private jet expansion plans](#) at Hanscom Field airport
to protect the climate & national historic sites*

- **LETTER** signed by over 40 leading historians, scientists, and climate and environmental advocates
[See signers' names below & [here](#)]
- **PETITION**, by the National Trust for Historic Preservation with 4,300 signatures nationwide
This is in addition to the over 14,000 signatures gathered by a [separate petition](#).

SIGNERS OF THE LETTER & PETITION express deep concerns that the proposed expansion is a threat to:

- **Our warming planet & Massachusetts efforts to combat climate change:**
If the proposed expansion goes forward, private jet emissions from Hanscom alone could cancel 70% of the climate gains from all solar PV installed in Massachusetts, thus negating hard-won gains by towns and cities throughout Massachusetts.
- **Our nation's historic and natural sites:**
The National Trust for Historic Preservation designated *Minute Man National Historical Park, Walden, and Nearby Landmarks* as among [America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places](#) last year due to the nearby proposed private jet expansion at Hanscom Field airport (not Hanscom Air Force Base which has no airfield).

**RELEASED TODAY! – [LUMINARY LETTER](#) with over 40 SIGNERS urging Governor Healey to stop the private jet expansion at Hanscom Field airport to protect the climate and national historic sites:
See signers below & [here](#):**

Bill McKibben Environmentalist, Author, Founder 350.org	Ashley Judd Goodwill Ambassador for the UN Population Fund Actor, Author, and Activist
Don Henley Founder: Walden Woods Project, Recording Artist	Abigail Disney Documentary Film Director, Producer, and Screenwriter
Naomi Oreskes Professor of History of Science and Affiliated Professor of Earth and Planetary Sciences, Harvard University Geologist, Science Historian, and Author	James Taylor Recording Artist

Annie Leibovitz

American Portrait Photographer, Author

Ed Begley, Jr.

Environmentalist, Actor, Author

Jeff Corwin

Explorer and Naturalist

Executive Producer and Host: ABC's Wildlife Nation

Susan Solomon, Ph.D.

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

Sy Montgomery

Naturalist and Author

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)

Ken Burns

Documentarian Filmmaker

Terry Tempest Williams

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

David Gessner

Nature and Environmental Author and Essayist; Professor of Creative Writing, University of North Carolina Wilmington

Roger Christie

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

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

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 Rev. Dr. Jim Antal

Special Advisor on Climate Justice to the General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ, author of *Climate Church, Climate World: How People of Faith Must Work for Change*

Lyle Lovett

Recording Artist, Composer and Songwriter

Paula Poundstone

Humorist, Author, NPR Commentator

Gregory Maguire

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

Douglas Brinkley, Ph.D.

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

John DeVillars

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

Kathrine Switzer

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

Mark Thoreau

Henry David Thoreau Family Descendant

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

Michael Muir

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

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

Katherine Lee Goyette

Staff Attorney, CLF Conservation Law Foundation

Kristen Sykes

Northeast Regional Director, NPCA National Parks Conservation Association

J. Drew Lanham

American Author, Poet, and Wildlife Biologist, MacArthur Fellowship 2022

Robert M. Thorson

Professor of Earth Sciences, University of Connecticut

<p>Robert D. van der Hilst, Ph.D. Professor of Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences, Massachusetts Institute of Technology</p> <p>James Gustave Speth Co-Founder, National Resources Defense Council, Chair, President Carter’s Council on Environmental Quality, Former Dean, Yale School of Environment</p> <p>Elizabeth Turnbull Henry President, Environmental League of Massachusetts</p> <p>Robert A. Gross Professor of Early American History (Emeritus), University of Connecticut, Author of The Minutemen and Their World and The Transcendentalists and Their World</p> <p>Kathleen Fahey Executive Director, Friends of Minute Man National Park</p> <p>Richard D. Brown, Ph.D. Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor of History (emeritus) University of Connecticut; Author</p>	<p>Author of The Guide to Walden Pond, The Boatman: Henry David Thoreau’s River Years, Walden’s Shore, Beyond Walden</p> <p>Sara Seager, Ph.D. Astrophysicist and Author, Professor of Physics, Aerospace Engineering, Planetary Science, Aeronautics and Astronautics Massachusetts Institute of Technology</p> <p>Dorie McCullough Lawson Author, Counselor Daughter of Historian David McCullough</p> <p>David N. Duncan President, American Battlefield Trust</p> <p>John M. Fowler Former Executive Director, National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation</p> <p>Jan Turnquist Executive Director, Louisa May Alcott’s Orchard House</p>
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Excerpt from Luminary Letter:

“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.”

Schedule of Events: MEDIA INVITED TO BOTH PART 1 & 2 – note different rooms

PART 1: 10:00-11:00am, Senate Reading Room, 3rd floor – SPECIAL REMARKS by: - MEDIA INVITED

- Welcome & Closing: Anna West Winter, *Executive Director, Save Our Heritage*
- Senator Mike Barrett *for the 3rd Middlesex District of Massachusetts*
- Representative Simon Cataldo *for the 14th Middlesex District in Massachusetts*
- Betsy Merritt, *Deputy General Counsel for the National Trust for Historic Preservation*
- Kristen Sykes, *Northeast Regional Director, National Parks Conservation Association*
- Daniel Emerson, *descendant of Ralph Waldo Emerson*
- Reverend Jim Antal (virtual), *Special Advisor on Climate Justice, United Church of Christ*
- Mark Thoreau, *family descendant of Henry David Thoreau*

PART 2: 11:15 - 11:45am, Executive Office of the Governor, West Wing, 3rd floor – MEDIA INVITED DELIVERY & PRESENTATION of the following:

- **Letter** delivered by Thoreau and Emerson descendants, Mark Thoreau and Daniel Emerson
- **Petition signatures** delivered by Betsy Merritt, National Trust for Historic Presentation

NOTE TO REPORTERS:

- Luminary Letter with over 40 signers at [this link](#)
- Photos & videos – [at this link](#) available afternoon of April 1st
- Speakers’ Remarks at [this link](#)

BACKGROUND

The Threat: Proposed Private Jet Hangar Expansion at Hanscom Field

The proposed private jet hangar expansion would:

- add 522,380 square feet (two-thirds of a mile) of private luxury jet hangar space on 50 acres
- clearcut and pave 20 acres of forested land
- build 17 hangars that would double the current private jet infrastructure at the airport
- house 63-76 additional new private jets
- add approximately 6,000 additional new private jet flights annually
- add approximately 150,000 tons of additional greenhouse gas emissions each year
- locate on land which the EPA has identified as contaminated by PFAS

Hanscom is already the second busiest airport in New England after Logan. [An independent study](#) found that the proposed development would add more than 6,000 additional new private jet flights to the airport, an increase that would be felt by Logan as well. The same study observed that “this single project would add the same level of jet hangar capacity that was built at Hanscom incrementally over the prior 60 years.” ([IEC Study, p. 4](#))

HISTORIC IMPACTS

Minute Man National Historical Park, Walden and Nearby Landmarks are located in the Towns of Concord, Lexington, Lincoln and Bedford. The historic towns include the birthplace of the American Revolution, the cradle of the American Environmental Movement, and the home of the American Literary Renaissance.

At the intersection of the four towns lies Hanscom Field Airport operated by the Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport). Plans for a massive private jet hangar expansion at Hanscom’s North Airfield would double the private jet infrastructure and dramatically increase flights, noise and greenhouse gas emissions. The jets would use the runway that directly overflies Minute Man Park, Walden, Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge and the historic homes. Hanscom is the only airport in the country that abuts a national historic park and a national wildlife refuge.

For these reasons, last May 1st, the National Trust for Historic Preservation designated *Minute Man National Historic Park, Walden, and Nearby Landmarks* among [America’s 11 Most Endangered Historic Places](#), specifically due to the threat of the proposed private jet expansion at nearby Massport-owned Hanscom Field airport (not to be confused with Hanscom Air Force Base).

Last year at the Vatican’s Climate Summit, Governor Healey gifted the Pope a copy of Thoreau’s *Walden*. Last January, the opening remarks of her State of the Commonwealth speech on January 16th acknowledged the importance of our shared history:

“250 years ago this April, on a common in Lexington and a bridge in Concord, the farmers, tradesmen and shopkeepers of the Massachusetts Militia took a stand. They risked everything for the right to self-government and they started the Revolution that gave us our country. This is our legacy, Massachusetts, and it’s more than history. It’s who we are. The militia that fought at Lexington and Concord, guess what? It never disbanded.”

Event organizers are hopeful that the April 1st event will inspire the Governor to take action to protect the very places to which she referred with such reverence, and remind her of what’s at stake: the preservation of our national historic and natural resources, as well as the protection of our climate.

For **Additional Details** re: **Endangered National Historic & Natural sites**, [click here](#)

CLIMATE IMPACTS

- Private jets are recognized as the most carbon-intensive form of travel per passenger.
- A [2024 study from Sweden](#) found that passengers in the larger private jets caused more CO₂ emissions in an hour than the average person did in a year – reflecting a dramatically disproportionate impact
- Similarly, a [recent Oxfam study](#), called *Carbon Inequality Kills*, found that:

- o the average annual emissions from the private jets of 23 super rich individuals exceeded 2,000 tonnes of carbon – “equivalent to 300 years' worth of emissions for the average person in the world, or over 2,000 years' worth for someone in the global poorest 50%.”
 - o Half these trips were less than 300 miles, with many trips serving “like taxis” for trips of less than 30 miles.
 - o More than 40% of the flights were to holiday destinations or to sporting events.
 - o As Oxfam executive director Amitabh Behar said recently, “The superrich are treating our planet like their personal playground, setting it ablaze for pleasure and profit.”
- An [October 2023 report specific to Hanscom Field airport](#), as reported by WBUR, showed nearly half the private jet flights from Hanscom were less than an hour.
 - If the proposed development goes forward, private jet emissions from Hanscom alone would reach levels high enough to cancel out 70% of the hard-won climate gains of all the solar PV currently installed by individuals, towns and cities across the state of Massachusetts.
 - [Private jet flights have been soaring](#) since the pandemic. Last May, private jet flights surpassed pre-pandemic levels by over 30%. The private jet industry forecasts a 4-8% growth annually.
 - The resulting emissions from **these growth trends are expected to outstrip existing and forthcoming energy efficiencies, including those anticipated from the newly passed Massachusetts climate bill last November.**

STATUS of the proposed private jet hangar expansion

The expansion at Massport-owned Hanscom Field airport (not at Hanscom Air Force Base) is undergoing a state environmental review under MEPA (MA Office of Environmental Policy Act) under the name of the “L.G. Hanscom Field North Airfield Development” project.

Last June, Rebecca Tepper, Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), [rejected the developers’ DEIR](#) (Draft Environmental Impact Report) finding that it “does not adequately and properly comply with MEPA and its implementing regulations.” Secretary Tepper instructed the developers to go back to the drawing board and produce a Supplemental DEIR (SDEIR). The SDEIR is still pending.

Advocates believe that the over 1,500 submitted public comments on the developers’ DEIR refuting their claims contributed to its rejection by MEPA.

Who can stop it:

- MEPA is limited to requiring full disclosure of environmental impacts of a proposal and it does not have the authority to approve or deny a proposal.
- Massport and the developers can terminate the project anytime.
- The Governor has considerable means, albeit indirect, to shape the outcome of such plans.

Today’s event demonstrates to the Governor that she has widespread public support – statewide and national -- to stop private jet expansion at Hanscom or anywhere.

WIDESPREAD PUBLIC SUPPORT — statewide and national -- to stop private jet expansion at Hanscom or anywhere include, in addition to today’s Letter & Petition:

- Over 100 organizations across Massachusetts, from Boston to the Berkshires and beyond
- Over 14,000 individuals have signed [a petition](#) urging Governor Healey to stop private jet expansion at Hanscom or anywhere
- Over a dozen Municipalities and Faith Communities have passed Resolutions – with the same message to the Governor
- On 5/1/24 the National Trust for Historic Preservation designated **Minute Man National Historical Park, Walden, and Nearby Landmarks** among **America’s 11 Most Endangered Historic Places** due to the threat of the proposed private jet expansion at nearby Hanscom Field airport (not Hanscom Air Force Base, which has no airfield).

- National Parks Conservation Association’s voice and co-sponsorship of today’s April 1st event

QUOTATIONS:

Henry David Thoreau – January 3rd, 1861

“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, for a stated sum... **Thank God, men cannot as yet fly, and lay waste to the sky as well as the earth...** 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.**”

Selected Quotations from April 1, 2025 event:

Mark Thoreau, family descendant of Henry David Thoreau, 4/1/25 – Speaker at 4/1/25 event

“How might Henry react to the thought of man’s ignorance, actions, and inactions leading to the melting of the ice sheets of Greenland and Antarctica...

“I believe Henry would...direct our attention to changing the perspective and intentions of those who would, for personal profit, act to disproportionately hasten the cataclysmic warming of our planet – like the proponents of this misguided and harmful Hanscom private jet development project. Henry would fervently support the conviction of the Healey administration to continue to stand tall and unwavering against the increasing regressive and dangerous forces of climate change denial -- and he would say to all of us here today, and I quote, ‘let your life be a counter friction to stop the machine.’ Henry would argue: There is absolutely no rational excuse for annually adding 6,000 private jet flights over the endangered historic sites or 150,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions into our already imperiled atmosphere.”

Daniel Emerson, descendant of Ralph Waldo Emerson, 4/1/25 – Speaker at 4/1/25 event

“We are called to action because the quiet voice with which these hallowed grounds speak to us is now threatened to be drowned out by insensitive development. Emerson observed ‘Passion, though a bad regulator, is a powerful spring’. So how do we best move to defend these fragile historic and natural resources? How do we convince these investment bankers to invest in a positive, sustainable use of their property? These private jets would generate hundreds of thousands of tons of greenhouse gas emissions directly over Minute Man National Historical Park, Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge and Walden Pond, and harm wildlife, families, children. As the headwinds that blow against environmental protection have suddenly gained strength, there is no time for complacency – as Ralph Waldo reminds us: ‘Good thoughts are no better than good dreams unless they be executed.’”

Betsy Merritt, National Trust for Historic Preservation – cosponsor of 4/1/25 event

Letter to Governor Healey: “You illustrated your deep understanding and reverence for Walden Pond and Walden Woods when, during the Climate Summit at the Vatican last year, you presented the Pope with a copy of Thoreau’s *Walden*. And on January 16th you acknowledged the continuing significance of the North Bridge and Lexington Green, in the opening remarks of your State of the Commonwealth address:

‘250 years ago this April, on a common in Lexington and a bridge in Concord, the farmers, tradesmen and shopkeepers of the Massachusetts Militia took a stand. They risked everything for the right to self-government and they started the Revolution that gave us our country. This is our legacy, Massachusetts, and it’s more than history. It’s who we are. The militia that fought at Lexington and Concord, guess what? It never disbanded.’

In the spirit of Thoreau’s Walden and in the spirit of the Minute Men who “risked everything for the right to self-government,” the National Trust for Historic Preservation today presents this petition signed by more than 4,300 concerned Americans nationwide. They join the voices of:

- more than 40 leading historians, scientists, and climate and environmental advocates,
- more than 100 organizations across the Commonwealth and beyond, and
- more than 14,000 individuals who have signed an additional petition.

All are appealing to you as Governor to take decisive action to stop the proposed private jet expansion. It is fitting that we are joined here today by descendants of Thoreau and Emerson to remind us of what's at stake: the preservation of our national historic sites, our natural world, and a stabilized climate upon which it all depends."

Kristen Sykes, National Parks Conservation Association — cosponsor of 4/1/25 event

"From the famed shot heard round the world to the recent discovery of musket balls from that storied battle, Minute Man National Historical Park holds the incredible stories of the earliest days of the American Revolution," said Kristen Sykes, Northeast Regional Director for the National Parks Conservation Association.

"This new proposal to construct 17 new private jet hangers within a mile of Minute Man puts all this invaluable Revolutionary War history at risk. People come to our national parks to experience American history firsthand, not to listen to massive private jets flying overhead. This proposed development would disrupt visitors seeking to walk through the steps of our shared heritage during America's 250 th anniversary, one of the busiest times the park may ever see. That's why the National Parks Conservation Association is calling for Governor Healey to immediately reject the Hanscom airfield expansion."

Prior Quotations, selection:

Ashley Judd, UNFPA Goodwill Ambassador, Actor, Author and Activist --

"Against the dire backdrop of our warming climate and the climate disasters that result, causing so much suffering for millions, it is utterly appalling to consider a massive development for luxury private jets in the midst of the landscape that inspired the founding of our democracy and the American environmental movement. We must take responsibility for protecting both our historic sites and our planet by firmly opposing this completely senseless development"

Douglas Brinkley, Historian and Author --

"If We The People allow this odious jetport enlargement to forge forward, we will be sending a solemn message to future generations that our treasured historic places of today will be tomorrow's runways for the privileged few."

- For more **Quotations** from leading voices re: **Historic Impacts**, [click here](#)
- For more **Quotations** from Legislators & leading voices re: **Climate Impacts**, [click here](#)