



Chair Oliveira and Chair Fiola,  
Members of the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government

The Nantucket Island Chamber of Commerce is writing to you in full opposition of Senate bill 1315, proposing changes to the municipal voting splits at the Steamship Authority (SSA).

While Nantucket is geographically separated from the rest of Massachusetts, we are directly tethered to the mainland as our primary source of groceries, fuel, medical supplies, building materials, and other retail goods. The Steamship Authority is not merely a convenience, it is a true lifeline.

We understand the proposed bill makes adjustments to the voting power of the governing board at the SSA and does not specifically call for a reduction in freight or goods to the island. However, the publicly stated purpose of the bill by its proponents implies using the new voting makeup as a method of controlling traffic and shipments through the Falmouth and Hyannis regions. The catastrophic economic consequence of a disruption in flow, decrease in volume, or any other restriction on goods destined to the islands is immeasurable. One hundred percent of industries would be negatively affected. While our twenty thousand island residents would shoulder much of the pain, the tourism economy would be negatively impacted as well.

While we are not indifferent to the challenges facing communities on the mainland, it is imperative that voting control at the Steamship Authority remain as it is. Simply stated, any decisions and subsequent actions at the Steamship have a greater impact on the islands than the other three voting municipalities, and the current voting makeup reflects that.

Our organization is happy to support the Steamship's governing board with other solutions to the issues raised by Sen. Moran and her constituents. While it appears to be an innocuous bill framed as providing equity among the voting body, we hope you consider the potentially severe consequences of passing S.1315, and ask that you reject this bill in favor of developing other solutions.

Respectfully submitted,  
The Nantucket Island Chamber of Commerce

Patrick Ridge  
President of the Board

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Burke', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Peter Burke  
Executive Director