



RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF REGIONAL COMMISSIONERS

BARNSTABLE COUNTY

AUGUST 27, 2025

WHEREAS, the voters of Barnstable County adopted a Charter for its regional government in November of 1988; and

WHEREAS, the 1988 Charter Commission called for a new county charter to address “issues that transcend existing municipal boundaries on the one hand and which cannot be addressed effectively by statewide regulations on the other;” and

WHEREAS, the 1988 Charter Commission envisioned that the County government would provide regional services to all towns within Barnstable County “including - but not limited to - public works, refuse disposal, public health services, water distribution, police, fire, and other public safety services, sewage treatment and disposal, real property assessment and transportation services;” and

WHEREAS, the Charter Commission envisioned these services would assist the towns of Barnstable County in addressing the “disposal of septage, sewerage, solid and toxic waste; adequate supply of quality water; air pollution; traffic and transportation; law enforcement; public health;” and

WHEREAS, the regional services would provide efficiencies and cost savings to the towns and the taxpayers of Barnstable County. And further, that since 1988 very little progress has been made in providing these regional services, or in creating the efficiencies and cost savings envisioned in the 1988 Report of the Charter Commission; and

WHEREAS, the 1988 Report of the Charter Commission called for additional revenues from the state and other sources to assist in providing regional services, including funds to pay for services that were once fully paid for by state government; and

WHEREAS, the long-term financial liabilities and challenges identified in 1988 still exist while additional burdens are being imposed on the towns of Barnstable County, thereby creating an even greater need for intermunicipal collaboration, regional solutions, and cost efficiencies; and

WHEREAS, the projected overhead and recurring expenses of Barnstable County are increasing at a pace that will exceed recurring revenues, creating unsustainable and structurally imbalanced County budgets; and

WHEREAS, all county governments in Massachusetts derive significant revenues from the towns within their respective jurisdictions, and that municipal officials in all counties except Barnstable County are provided a direct say on county finances and regional decisions; and

WHEREAS, in Barnstable County, municipal officials and leaders of town governments should be able to provide direct input on the county budget, the creation of regional services to benefit the towns, and the decisions on regional issues that affect the 15 towns on Cape Cod; and

WHEREAS, over the years Barnstable County officials have received numerous suggestions and reports from respected civic leaders and organizations that would create a more effective and responsive regional government, and these recommendations have not been acted upon; and

WHEREAS, these recommendations have called for a unified county government that can advocate for regional solutions, and speak with one voice to the Massachusetts General Court and the federal government; and

WHEREAS, the Report of the 1988 Charter Commission called for regular and thorough reviews of the County Charter and that state law and the current charter provide a pathway for a thorough charter review through an elected charter commission; and

WHEREAS, the Barnstable County Board of Regional Commissioners is committed to seeking and supporting an independent review of the existing county charter and restoring the role of the municipalities in Barnstable County government; to find ways to streamline decision-making; and to adopt more cost-effective ways to deliver services, creating saving for our towns and taxpayers wherever possible; and

WHEREAS, the voters of Barnstable County have a direct interest in their county governance,

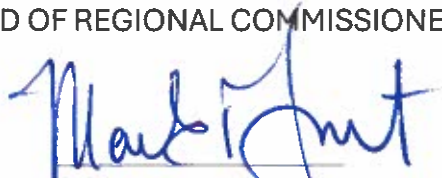
NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Barnstable County Board of Regional Commissioners, under the authority vested in them by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, that a question be placed on the upcoming biennial state election ballot, to create an elected charter study commission and elected commission members representing each town in Barnstable County in accordance with Chapter 801 of the Acts of 1985.

This Resolution is adopted on this day, August 27, 2025, in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 801 of the Acts of 1985.

BOARD OF REGIONAL COMMISSIONERS



Sheila Lyons, Chairman



Mark Forest, Vice Chairman



Ronald Bergstrom