



December 23, 2021

Honorable Brian Weeden

Chairman, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe

483 Great Neck Road South

Mashpee, MA 02649

Dear Chairman, Weeden:

As Chairwoman of the Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe of Plymouth Massachusetts, I am thrilled to congratulate you and all Mashpee citizens on the Interior Department's decision confirming your trust land. This long-delayed acknowledgment is so foundational that I know our ancestors are rejoicing with yours.

Mashpee has worked long and hard to achieve this result, including decades in pursuit of federal recognition, and then beating the Carcieri barrier – twice! By gathering and presenting the documents that manifest centuries of Wampanoag endurance and resilience, you have educated the United States to look more closely at the tribes it shamefully neglected. The decision itself validates the knowledge that we all share that official ignorance of our existence for any time period has no bearing on the truth of our persistence and survival.

As Indigenous peoples, we have an inherent responsibility to protect the homelands that sustain us. Like Mashpee, we are fortunate to live among our Ancestors. That continued presence ensures that, the Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe remains deeply connected, culturally and spiritually, to our homelands. That connection animates our efforts to preserve

our culture and heritage for following generations. Most importantly, we know that we have a primary responsibility to our tribal youth to prepare them for a strong future as self-determining citizens of the Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe and ensure that they, and their children, inherit a world that has been nurtured by us.

Like you, we have always known that your Tribe's history required this result. We rejoice as you discover new opportunities to flourish in your traditional lands. Your efforts will strengthen other tribes, like us, in efforts to carry our communities forward from difficult times to a better future.

So we congratulate you. We thank you. And we look forward to continuing to work with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Melissa Ferretti".

Melissa (Harding) Ferretti

Chairwoman, Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe

128 Herring Pond Road

Plymouth, MA 02360

508.304.5023

cc: Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribal Council