TOWN OF DOUGLAS

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July 6, 2015

The Hon. Matthew A. Beaton
Secretary, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Secretary Beaton:

Last week, in advance of the July 4, 2015 Holiday, I traveled to Boston with Douglas public safety officials to relay once again the unmistakable need for a singular park closure policy at the Douglas State Forest. We were also eager to discuss the implementation of an expected and highly appreciated state law that will provide additional monies earmarked to, and for, Douglas public safety departments.

As you know, the expected state law was passed in recognition for the time and personnel drain your park places on us.

In the end, we left with a mere acknowledgement that July 4th fell on Saturday and were initially granted an extension of the park closure policy to include July 3rd. We successfully made the case that July 5th should be included as well. We spoke passionately on behalf of the townspeople and for sound public safety measures. DCR pledged to look at the singular park closure policy further. We have been down that road before.

What's more, DCR's interpretation of the expected state law is quite cloudy at this time and I am concerned that proposed regulations written fall far short of the Legislature's intentions. State Senator Ryan Fattman (R-Webster) and state Representative Joseph McKenna (R-Webster) are deeply concerned about the "floated" interpretation as well.

As one of your first acts as secretary you came before the Board of Selectmen and we relayed to you strongly the Town's universal support for a working partnership with the state. Indeed, overtures from Gov. Charlie Baker and yourself have been made but we find ourselves deep into the 2015 summer yearning for a sturdier one.

DCR's systemic opposition to our identified public safety and quality of life issues is thick and has grown tiresome. As a town father, I believe DCR continues to take a heavy-, stubborn- and hurtful-hand in dealing with this Host Community.

Douglas is a tinderbox and I am deeply concerned that a tragic event will take place as a result of the Commonwealth's policies and facilities here. It is only a matter of time.

In fact, reports from our police department over the weekend indicate that park visitors were videotaping our police while they carried out their duties to maintain the public order. They were simply managing the movement of illegally parked cars. I can assure you they have better things to do.

There is nothing more I can add in respect to relaying our concerns or our locally-produced policy ideas. The Town's position is well-documented. It is easily told.

I will, however, continue to try to appeal to your intellect and good intentions as we share a common, and irrevocable, bond.

As a 1992 St. John's of Shrewsbury alumnus, I suspect you had the fortune of being taught the "Serenity Prayer" by Mrs. Meg Curran. Undoubtedly, you recall the passion and veracity she brought to her teachings and, in particular, the strength of this prayer.

*"God grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can and Wisdom to know the difference."*

On this issue, I have found my serenity. State leaders will commit to our locally identified solutions or they will not. State law limits my ability as a selectman to change the operations of a state park.

If there are substantive changes to be implemented, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached directly at 401-580-9602.

Yours truly,

Timothy P. Bonin

Cc: Gov. Charlie Baker
Sen. Ryan Fattman
Rep. Joseph McKenna