

April 22, 2026

Board of Selectmen
The Honorable Rob Wright, Chairman
Town of Rye
10 Central Road
Rye, NH 03870

Dear Chairman Wright and Members of the Board:

We are writing to inform you of our intent to file a petition for a special town meeting for the purpose of considering a bird colony protection ordinance. While this ordinance would apply beyond Goss Farm, the ordinance has been precipitated by the Rye Conservation Commission's unwillingness to reconsider its decision to close the Goss Farm Barn to the colony of swallows that has nested there for many years.

We have collected the necessary signatures for the petition, as many Rye residents believe that the use of the building by people and the swallows is not mutually exclusive. Moreover, we believe that any purported health risks from the birds—with young in the nest for only about 6 weeks—can be easily eliminated by far less extreme measures than exclusion, based upon our consultation with health and bird experts.

Many bird species in New Hampshire are in serious decline, including barn swallows. When these birds are lost, their benefits for agriculture, pest control, recreation, and the economy are also diminished. Even if returning adult swallows do not die as a result of exclusion from the barn, the loss of a breeding season will result in a net loss of birds from their population.

The nesting structures built by the RCC are untested, unlikely to succeed in the opinion of avian experts, and—as conceded by the RCC—inadequate to support the entire colony of nesting swallows. If anything, they will be a more effective attractant of nesting hornets and wasps than birds.

We understand that the Goss Farm Barn is an RCC property. We request a special town meeting at which the Town's legislative body may consider an ordinance to protect colony-nesting birds and their habitat on Town-owned property. We tried to find a less burdensome option, but were unable to do so. We would be pleased to answer any questions you may have at your next scheduled meeting if given the opportunity. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Scott F. Marion, Ph.D., 71 Washington Rd, Rye, NH



Tom Sherman, M.D., 296 Harbor Rd., Rye, NH

cc: Rye Conservation Commission; Victor Odryna, Chairman