



July 18, 2018

The Honorable Anne M. Gobi
24 Beacon St.
Room 513
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable William Smitty Pignatelli
24 Beacon St.
Room 473F
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Donald F. Humason, Jr.
24 Beacon St.
Room 313-A
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Donald R. Berthiaume, Jr.
24 Beacon St.
Room 540
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable William N. Brownsberger
24 Beacon St.
Room 504
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable David M. Nangle
24 Beacon St.
Room 479
Boston, MA 02133

Re: Support for Public Lands Preservation Act – Outside Section 71 to
Environmental Bond Bill (S.2602)

Dear Conferees:

We are writing to request respectfully that the Conference Committee support the Public Lands Preservation Act included as outside section 71 of S.2602, *An Act promoting climate change adaptation, environmental and natural resource protection, and investment in recreational assets and opportunity.*

Every municipality in Massachusetts has a park, playground, conservation land, watershed, forest, or other open space permanently protected under Article 97 of the Commonwealth Constitution. These lands are at the core of our health, water supply, recreation, economy, and quality of life.

Also, many Article 97 lands are coastal, riparian, wetland, or watershed lands, or will be due to rising sea levels. They are important to preserve for the role they play in climate change adaptation to extreme weather events as buffers, sequestering water in time of flood and releasing it in time of drought.

These Article 97 lands have received significant protection since 1998 from a “No Net Loss” policy administered by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, which currently states that there be replacement land when any Article 97 land is changed in use or disposed.

The Public Lands Preservation Act would codify this No Net Loss policy in statute and was adopted as an amendment to the Environmental Bond Bill passed by the Senate (outside section 71 of S.2602). This outside section would save time and money for municipalities and the executive branch by clarifying, streamlining, and making more transparent the process of changing the use or disposing of Article 97 land and of providing replacement land.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Casey Bowers, Legislative Director, Environmental League of Massachusetts (617 742-2553, cbowers@environmentalleague.org).

Sincerely,

Heather Clish, Appalachian Mountain Club
 Casey Bowers, Environmental League of Massachusetts
 Dot McGlinchy, Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions
 Karen Heyman, Mass Audubon
 Emily Norton, Sierra Club Massachusetts Chapter
 Steve Long, The Nature Conservancy
 Jocelyn Forbush, The Trustees of Reservations

c.c.: The Honorable Harriette L. Chandler, President of the Senate
 The Honorable Robert A. DeLeo, Speaker of the House

