



CONTACTS

July 19, 2018

Karen Heymann
Mass Audubon
617-523-8448
kheyman@massaudubon.org

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

Steve Long
The Nature Conservancy
617-532-8367
slong@tnc.org

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

Linda Orel
The Trust for Public Land
617-371-0526
linda.orel@tpl.org

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

ORGANIZATIONS

Re: H.4613/ S.2602 An Act promoting climate change adaptation, environmental and natural resource protection, and investment in recreational assets and opportunity.

- American Farmland Trust
- Appalachian Mountain Club
- Environmental League of Massachusetts
- Mass Association of Conservation Commissions
- Mass Audubon
- Mass. Forest Alliance
- Mass Land Trust Coalition
- Mass Rivers Alliance
- Sierra Club
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Trust for Public Land
- The Trustees of Reservations

Dear Conferees,

The Commonwealth Conservation Council (CCC) is a statewide coalition comprised of land and water conservation organizations, land trusts, farmers, and foresters representing more than 400,000 families committed to natural resource preservation in Massachusetts. Our organizations strongly support the passage of the environmental bond bill.

Capital investments in our air, land, water and food are critical to our quality of life, future generations, and our economy:

- **Natural Goods and Services:** For every \$1 invested in land conservation, \$4 in natural resource goods and services is returned to the Massachusetts economy. These services benefit municipalities and include water quality protection, flood control, air pollution removal, carbon sequestration and stormwater management.
- **Forestry and Forest Products:** The annual Gross State Output of Massachusetts’s forest products industry totals nearly \$3 billion, while the forest-based recreation economy generates approximately \$2.2 billion annually.
- **Agriculture:** The average acre of Massachusetts farmland produces \$26,000 in total annual output.
- **Leverage:** State investments bring in federal, local and private matching funds for conservation purposes. For every \$1 the state invests, nearly an additional \$2 is leveraged from other sources.

- **Outdoor Recreation Economy:** Over \$16 billion is spent on outdoor recreation in Mass, supporting 120,000 direct jobs, and nearly \$1 billion in state and local revenue each year.

We request that the following recommendations be included in the final bond bill:

Section 13. Climate Adaptation, Senate

The CCC supports the language would also establish an implementation stakeholder group to help the Commonwealth realize the goals for the statewide climate adaptation plan. Senate language also requires that state policy be consistent with the policy recommendations of the statewide climate adaptation plan. This language was included in the climate adaptation legislation which has been passed by the Senate numerous times in the current and previous sessions.

Section 71. Public Lands Preservation, Senate

This amendment would codify current state policy that there be no net loss of lands or easement protected under Article 97 of the Massachusetts constitution, while establishing a transparent and timely process for the transfer or change in use of state and municipal Article 97 land. The amendment would ensure that the integrity of Article 97 is upheld, while providing clear cost- and time- effective guidelines for municipalities to follow when submitting proposed Article 97 dispositions to the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) for review.

Coastal Resilience, Senate

This language would provide for Select Boards in towns to authorize the use of coastal resilience infrastructure funds in certain projects, rather than requiring town meeting action. While good municipal oversight is appropriate, aligning grant cycles with annual or semi-annual town meetings could pose an insurmountable obstacle to securing this funding for good projects. Providing for Select Board approval maintains good oversight while facilitating successful project outcomes. The CCC also supports Senate language which would allow for funds to be utilized by nonprofits and private land owners in order to achieve resiliency project goals where land is owned by a variety of entities.

Section 10. Nature-Based Solutions Definition, Senate

The CCC recommends retaining the Senate definition of “nature-based solutions”, the role nature plays in climate change adaptation, resiliency, and mitigation. Nature-based solutions are referenced throughout the bond line items, and it is important to include a statutory definition that can be cross-referenced to ensure consistency in implementation across agencies. This proposed definition is parallel with the definition in Executive Order 569 and is also similar to the definition the included by the Legislature in the Water Infrastructure Law of 2014 for Green Infrastructure.

2800-7020. Aquatic Invasives, Senate

Chapter 444 of the Acts of 2012, which amended G.L. c. 21, § 37B, requires the Department of Conservation and Recreation to “establish and maintain an aquatic nuisance control program” and “to promulgate rules and regulations, in consultation with the department of fish and game, to enable the aquatic nuisance control program to suppress, eradicate, control and otherwise

mitigate or reduce the risk of the spread of aquatic nuisances.” Aquatic nuisance plants are choking large areas of our inland waters turning them into “dead zones.” It is also critical that the spread of the highly invasive zebra mussel be prevented.

2000-7061. Forestry and Tree Planting, \$10 million, Senate

This highly successful program was initiated in the 2014 bond bill. EOEEA assists cities and nonprofit organizations in planting trees on public and private land, which has been shown to result in significant energy savings. For example, increasing mature tree canopy cover in urban residential neighborhoods by 20 percent can reduce household cooling expenses by 50 percent, and heating energy use by 30 percent. New authorization would enable trees to be planted in neighborhoods where the oldest, least insulated homes exist. The objective of this program is to increase canopy cover where needed by 20 percent, which would benefit up to one million households, result in a two million ton decrease of carbon dioxide yearly, and provide statewide, annual household energy savings of approximately \$640 million.

2000-7064. Coastal Buy-Back Program, \$30 million, Senate

Houses built on Massachusetts’ fragile and vulnerable beaches, banks and dunes face the prospect of stronger and more frequent storms, erosion and property loss as a result of rapid climate change and accelerated sea level rise. This new program (authorized in the previous bond but never funded) would allow for willing owners to sell their property to the Commonwealth if their homes have been repeatedly and substantially damaged due to such storms, and if their homes are located in a sensitive wetland resource area as defined by the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act. The Commonwealth would in turn preserve property and make it available for conservation and public recreational access. The CCC recommends this line item be granted \$30 million in new authorization as was included in the Senate version of the environmental bond bill.

Section 85. Mohawk Trail Woodland Partnership, House

The CCC supports this innovative model of voluntary grassroots collaboration between 21 municipalities in western Franklin county and northern Berkshire county, the Commonwealth’s economic development and environmental agencies, several non-profit organizations, and the U.S. Forest Service would boost both land conservation and economic development in this region. The MTWP will help keep the region’s forests as forests, and bring new sources of funding and assistance to landowners and communities. The Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership (MTWP) would increase the permanent conservation of at least 2,100 acres of forestland, which will remain in private ownership. These lands will continue to provide the many benefits forests provide for future generations. In addition, resources will be available to help stimulate forest-based economic development, including the creation of a multi-use Forestry Center to attract and educate visitors to the region, provide information and assistance to landowners managing their woods, help municipalities manage and take advantage of increased tourism, and support forest-based businesses.

Thank you again for your consideration, please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,
The Commonwealth Conservation Council