

December 19, 2018

Dear Members and Friends,

MCV Executive Director Doug Pizzi's opinion piece [published in the Worcester Telegram](#) describes legislation to remove 85 acres of land from the DCR Leominster State Forest to expand the Fitchburg-Westminster Land Fill. Currently operated by a division of Waste Management, public officials in the town of Westminster and the City of Fitchburg have expressed support for the legislation filed by Representatives Jon Zlotnik, Kim Ferguson, and Stephen Hay (notably, Representative Natalie Higgins of Leominster opposes the transfer). Following the legislative inaction on the bill in the last session, Mayor DiNatale of Fitchburg is quoted in an August 7th Sentinel & Enterprise news item, "We lost the battle, but we're going to continue the war."

The 4,200-acre forest is a north-central Mass treasure abutting the Gateway cities of Fitchburg, Leominster, and the town of Westminster (<https://www.mass.gov/locations/leominster-state-forest>). For the two cities, the DCR Leominster Forest is an economic magnet for those looking for small city life with abundant natural resources nearby – think of the importance of the Middlesex Fells and the Blue Hills Reservation to those abutting communities. Couple the forest with the Fitchburg-Leominster commuter rail and you have the makings of a true Gateway Cities success story.

Local supporters of the land taking say that closing the landfill will force the communities to look elsewhere for lost revenues. But this will always be the case – do they intend for the Forest to become a land bank for future expansions every ten years? And local officials also point to the loss of landfill capacity as a critical state issue. But why should Gateway cities bear the brunt of increased landfill capacity for the state? And why would the state want to give away its natural and recreational resources to support a privately managed landfill?

MCV doesn't know the answers to the state's landfill problems, but we are on very sure footing in opposing this land transfer. Conservation of the DCR land is crucial to that region for protection of their natural resources and for its future economic well-being.

Please take a moment to [read our blog and view the photos](#)--then keep an eye out for future updates from us on the pending 2019 legislation and what we can do to stop it.

We are heartened by your response to [our blog on the DCR Stewardship Council](#). Since its publication, there have been additional appointments: Alvin Reynolds and Vivian Ortiz whose professional backgrounds will add to the Council's expertise. There are still two remaining vacancies to the thirteen-member Stewardship Council. However, none of the incumbent Council members – Whitney Hatch (Chairman), Michelle Hanns, Heather Clish, and Elisa Campbell have yet to be notified of their reappointment.

[Call the Governor's office and urge their reappointment.](#) It is essential that the Council retain a balance between the many promising new members of the Council and those experienced Councilors who know the inner workings of the DCR. A balance is vital to all of our efforts in rebuilding the state's park system.

[Please consider making a financial contribution](#) and help us achieve our vision of a DCR that has voters' support to fully protect the state's Public Places.

We appreciate your support and our warmest wishes this season and for the new year.

Thank you,

Chuck Anastas
Chairman, MCV Board of Directors