

*'The people shall have the right to clean air and water, freedom from excessive and unnecessary noise, and the natural, scenic, historic, and esthetic qualities of their environment; and the protection of the people in their right to the conservation, development and utilization of the agricultural, mineral, forest, water, air and other natural resources is hereby declared to be a public purpose'. - Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution*

## **Public Lands Preservation Act**

**Lead Sponsors:** *Senator James B. Eldridge (Acton) and Representative Ruth B. Balsler (Newton)*

**In 1972, Massachusetts voters approved Article 97 of the state constitution to provide greater protection for public parks, conservation areas, forests and watershed lands.**

Disposing of or changing the use of such municipal or state land requires a favorable two-thirds vote of each branch of the legislature.

**The Public Lands Protection Act (PLPA)** would codify current state policy that there be no net loss of lands or easements protected under Article 97, while establishing a transparent and timely process for the transfer or change in use of state and municipal Article 97 land. The bill 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.

The PLPA would:

- Require that replacement land of comparable acreage, location and natural resource value be provided for each Article 97 disposition
- Require prior notification to EOEEA
- Increase transparency and efficiency in decision making process by EOEEA
- Establish waiver exemption from replacement land requirement in specific circumstances
- Provide clarity, increase efficiency, and reduce costs for municipalities and state agencies seeking disposition of Article 97 land
- Establish requirement for EOEEA to make recommendations to legislature on specific dispositions, to better inform legislative action

### **Benefits**

Public land provides the Commonwealth with many benefits, including protecting drinking water supplies, clean air, agriculture, forestry, recreation and tourism. Article 97 lands were protected using taxpayer dollars or donor contributions, and this bill will ensure that Article 97 dispositions don't undermine this protection.

### **Supporting Organizations**

Over 100 public and private organizations support the Public Lands Protection Act, including the Environmental League of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions, Mass Audubon, The Nature Conservancy in Massachusetts, Massachusetts Chapter of the Sierra Club, The Trustees, and many more (see over).

For more information contact Ken Pruitt ([ken.pruitt2020@gmail.com](mailto:ken.pruitt2020@gmail.com) , 781 454-6571) or Phil Saunders ([phil@philipsaunders.com](mailto:phil@philipsaunders.com), 781 239-0855).

*June 18 2018*

## PUBLIC LANDS PRESERVATION ACT SUPPORTERS

### Private

Appalachian Mountain Club  
Arborway Coalition  
Association to Preserve Cape Cod  
Barnstable Land Trust  
Berkshire Environmental Action Team  
Berkshire Natural Resources Council  
Boston Climate Action Network  
Brookline GreenSpace Alliance  
Charles River Conservancy  
Charles River Watershed Association  
Clean Water Action  
Connecticut River Conservancy  
Conservation Law Foundation  
East Quabbin Land Trust  
Emerald Necklace Conservancy  
Environment Massachusetts  
Environmental League of Massachusetts  
Essex County Greenbelt Association  
Essex County Trail Association  
Franklin Land Trust  
Friends of Harold Parker State Park  
Friends of Peru State Forest  
Friends of Robinson State Park  
Friends of the Blue Hills  
Friends of the Burlington Landlocked Forrest  
Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation  
Gateways Farm  
Green Berkshires  
Gun Owner's Action League  
Housatonic River Initiative  
Jones River Watershed Association  
Lincoln Land Conservation Trust  
Mass Audubon  
Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions  
Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition  
Massachusetts League of Environmental Voters  
Massachusetts Rivers Alliance  
Massachusetts Society of Municipal Conservation Professionals  
Merrimack River Watershed Council  
Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust  
Nashua River Watershed Association  
New England Forestry Foundation  
New England Wild Flower Society  
Newton Conservators  
North County Land Trust  
North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership  
Richmond Land Trust  
Sheffield Land Trust  
Sierra Club Massachusetts Chapter  
Soule Homestead Education Center  
Southeastern Massachusetts Pine Barrens Alliance  
Southwest Corridor Park Management Advisory Committee  
Sudbury Valley Trustees  
Taunton River Watershed Alliance, Inc.  
The Esplanade Association  
The Kestrel Trust  
The Nature Conservancy  
The Trust for Public Land  
The Trustees of Reservations  
Wachusett Greenways  
Waltham Land Trust  
Whately Land Preservation  
White Oak Land Conservation Society

June 18, 2018

### Public

Andover Conservation Commission  
Arlington Conservation Commission  
Ashland Conservation Commission  
Berlin Conservation Commission  
Beverly Conservation Commission  
Boxford Conservation Commission  
Brewster Conservation Commission  
Brookline Conservation Commission  
Burlington Conservation Commission  
Carlisle Conservation Commission  
Carver Conservation Commission  
Chicopee Conservation Commission  
Concord Natural Resources Commission  
Conway Conservation Commission  
Danvers Conservation Commission  
Douglas Conservation Commission  
Dudley Conservation Commission  
Essex Conservation Commission  
Foxborough Conservation Commission  
Franklin Conservation Commission  
Gloucester Conservation Commission  
Hadley Conservation Commission  
Harvard Conservation Commission  
Hingham Conservation Commission  
Holden Conservation Commission  
Holliston Conservation Commission  
Hopkinton Conservation Commission  
Huntington Conservation Commission  
Ipswich Conservation Commission  
Kingston Conservation Commission  
Lawrence Conservation Commission  
Lee Conservation Commission  
Leverett Conservation Commission  
Lincoln Conservation Commission  
Longmeadow Conservation Commission  
Medfield Conservation Commission  
Mendon Conservation Commission  
Metropolitan Area Planning Council  
Norfolk Conservation Commission  
North Andover Conservation Commission  
Norton Conservation Commission  
Norwell Conservation Commission  
Palmer Conservation Commission  
Peabody Conservation Commission  
Pepperell Conservation Commission  
Plymouth Conservation Commission  
Provincetown Conservation Commission  
Rehoboth Conservation Commission  
Rockport Conservation Commission  
Rowley Conservation Commission  
Saugus Conservation Commission  
Sherborn Conservation Commission  
Somerville Conservation Commission  
Southwick Conservation Commission  
Stoneham Conservation Commission  
Stow Conservation Commission  
Templeton Conservation Commission  
Topsfield Conservation Commission  
Wendell Conservation Commission  
Wenham Conservation Commission  
West Brookfield Conservation Commission  
Weston Conservation Commission  
Weston Planning Board  
Winthrop Conservation Commission  
Wrentham Conservation Commission