

PUBLIC LANDS PRESERVATION ACT

S2181

**Lead Sponsors: Senator Jamie Eldridge (Acton) and
Representative Ruth Balser (Newton)**

The *Public Lands Preservation Act* (PLPA) would further the long-standing goal of preventing the loss of constitutionally protected public parks, conservation land, forests, watersheds and other natural resource lands (Article 97 lands). These lands provide us all with more and better water, recreation, habitat for our diverse species of plants and wildlife, scenic amenities, a robust tourism industry, and a strong economy. They also play a key role in reducing carbon emissions and mitigating impacts of climate change.

What the PLPA would do

The PLPA requires that a municipality or state agency proposing disposition of or change in use of any lands or easements acquired for natural resource purposes (Article 97 land):

- Provide replacement land of comparable acreage, location, and natural resource value, i.e., *no net loss*.
- Notify the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) and provide information that would allow the Secretary to assess the need for the disposition or change in use, the availability of feasible alternatives, and the suitability of the replacement land being provided, and to make a recommendation on the proposed disposition or change in use.

The Secretary could waive the requirement for replacement land when a disposition or change in use would not change or would promote the Article 97 purposes and protection of the land, or to deal with defined special circumstances: easements for five years or less for another use, provided the land be restored at the end of the period; subterranean green energy projects; parcels of 2,500 square feet or less; and erosion control.

Changes in the PLPA

Revisions have been made in the PLPA to address concerns of legislators and others. The bill, rather than attempting to establish legislative policy, as before, now provides direction to the municipality or state agency seeking to change the use or otherwise dispose of Article 97 lands or easements. The bill also formalizes the current process EOEEA uses to vet any proposed change or disposition, requires early notification of EOEEA to facilitate the process, and requires EOEEA to make recommendations to the legislature.

Supporting organizations

Appalachian Mountain Club
Mass Association of Conservations Commissions
Mass Chapter of the Sierra Club

Environmental League of Massachusetts
Mass Audubon
The Nature Conservancy
The Trustees of Reservations

plus over 100 additional environmental organizations, conservation commissions, and other public bodies. See below for full list of supporters.

For more information

Contact Erica Mattison, Legislative Director, Environmental League of Massachusetts:
emattison@environmentalleague.org 617 742-2553.

PLPA 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 Robinson State Park
Friends of the Blue Hills
Friends of the Burlington Landlocked Forest
Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation
Friends of the Public Garden
Gateways Farm
Green Berkshires
Gun Owners Action League
Housatonic River Initiative
Jones River Watershed Association
Lincoln Land Conservation Trust
Mass Audubon
Massachusetts Assoc. of Conservation Commissions
Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition
Massachusetts League of Environmental Voters
Merrimack River Watershed Council
Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust
Nashua River Watershed Association
New England Forestry Foundation
New England Wild Flower Society
Nonotuck Land Fund
North County Land Trust, Inc.
North Quabbin Regional Land Trust
Richmond Land Trust
Sheffield Land Trust
Sierra Club Massachusetts Chapter
Soule Homestead Education Center
Southwest Corridor Park Conservancy
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

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
Chelmsford 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
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
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
Whately Conservation Commission
Winthrop Conservation Commission