



The Newsletter of the Massachusetts Land Conservation Community

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Items of interest to the Massachusetts land protection community.

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"What we preserve is just as important as what we build," said Governor Patrick. "We need to leave for future generations a legacy of nature, beauty, and serenity, along with a legacy of commerce and prosperity. That makes land preservation a worthy investment for the Commonwealth, now and in the future."

-- Deval L. Patrick (b. 1956), Governor of Massachusetts, 2007-present - statement to the press, August 3, 2007 --

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A BIG VICTORY! Gov. Patrick Signs the Environmental Bond with Tax Credit!

- 1) \$1.68 Billion Environmental Bond Signed - \$336 Million for Land Conservation!
- 2) Land Conservation Tax Credit Signed - Major New Landowner Conservation Incentive!
- 3) *PLEASE THANK THE GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATORS!*

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Action Alerts

1) A BIG VICTORY!

GOVERNOR PATRICK ENACTS \$1.68B ENVIRONMENTAL BOND!

Great news! We've just received word from Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs Secretary Ian Bowles that Governor Patrick this morning signed the historic Environmental Bond Bill. The Bond will provide \$1.68 billion in capital funds for vital state environmental programs over the next five years

including a record \$336 million for land acquisition! Early on in his campaign Governor Patrick promised to provide a minimum of \$50M per year for state land protection programs and the Environmental Bond fulfills this pledge.

In his signing statement, Governor Deval Patrick said, "The Commonwealth needs parks, farmlands, and recreational facilities that are second to none, in order to attract new residents and visitors, and enhance our quality of life".

"This bond bill advances Governor Patrick's priorities - land conservation and upgrading of assets in the care and custody of our state parks agency," said Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Ian Bowles. "It provides the bonding authority to give the citizens of the Commonwealth the great open spaces and the great parks, beaches, and recreation facilities they deserve."

In addition to the \$50 million a year for state land protection programs, the Bond includes:

- * Badly needed funding for Department of Conservation and Recreation state and urban parks which have a \$1.7 billion backlog of essential repairs and improvements
- * A new state income tax credit for landowners who voluntarily gift qualifying land to a municipality, the state or a nonprofit conservation organization
- * Capital funding to protect and restore freshwater, coastal and marine resources including community drinking water supplies, natural habitat for wildlife, and dam removal and repair
- * Funding for state environmental agencies to prepare for and manage climate change impacts that are already causing habitat destruction, water quality degradation and other problems

THANK YOU FOR YOUR EFFORTS TO PASS THE ENVIRONMENTAL BOND!

Truly, this would not have happened without the calls and letters of thousands of Massachusetts citizens who care about our environment, landscapes, wildlife and quality of life.

2) GOVERNOR SIGNS LAND CONSERVATION TAX CREDIT

The Bond also includes a state income tax credit for landowners who donate qualifying conservation or agricultural land to a municipality, the state, or a nonprofit conservation organization (effective January 2010). The tax incentive program, which the Governor sent back to the Legislature with a \$2 million per year cap, needs legislative approval which will be sought in the informal session of the legislature now under way. The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs will work with the Executive Office of Administration and Finance to devise a system of priorities to ensure that allowed tax credits have the maximum conservation benefits. The incentive is a great complement to the capital funds provided by the Environmental Bond, and will enhance and expand the state's ability to preserve natural areas.

Under the Act, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs must first determine whether lands proposed for donation are in the public interest for natural resource protection. Lands that protect drinking water supplies, unfragmented wildlife habitat, agricultural and forest products, archaeological and historical resources, scenic vistas, and recreational opportunities may be eligible. All donated lands must be permanently protected.

The Act grants a state income credit based on 50% of the appraised fair market value of the land. The credit is worth up to \$50,000 to landowners who donate natural areas to the state or a nonprofit conservation organization. For example, if donated property is valued at \$40,000, the landowner receives a \$20,000 credit towards his/her state income tax. The credit cannot exceed one's annual tax liability; however, it may be carried forward for ten consecutive years. In this example, the donor could receive a \$2,000 credit toward his/her state income tax each year for the next ten years.

**3) IMPORTANT!
PLEASE THANK THE GOVERNOR, SECRETARY & LEGISLATORS!**

Secretary Ian Bowles and his staff worked hard to craft and pass this historic Bond. And Secretary Bowles personally went to bat for the tax credit, which was opposed by the Executive Office of Administration and Finance, and was instrumental in persuading the Governor to keep the tax credit.

So let's make sure that we give credit where credit is due and thank the people who deserve it;

- * Governor Deval Patrick, who didn't have to give us as much as he did in a tight fiscal situation but who stuck to his promise to deliver an historic land conservation bill;
- * EEA Secretary Ian Bowles, for not just advocating but fighting for a better deal for conservation;
- * Senator Stephen Brewer, Chair of the Joint Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources, and Vice-Chair of Senate Committee on Ways and Means, who championed the Bond and the tax credit in the Legislature;
- * Senator Pam Resor, and Representatives Steve Kulik, Frank Smizik, and Bradley Jones, for championing the Bond and the Tax Credit;
- * Fish and Game Commissioner Mary Griffin and DCR Commissioner Rick Sullivan, both of whom have been instrumental in this battle;
- * Advocates Jen Ryan of Mass Audubon and Steve Long of The Nature Conservancy, who proved to be the most effective lobbying duo conservationists have had in years;
- * Jeremy Marin and the Coalition for the Environmental Bond, who mounted an extremely effective grassroots effort, enlisting over 260 organizations representing over 400,000 households in support;
- * EEA staff, particularly Bob O'Connor, who have been incredibly effective in constructing a far-reaching environmental Bond and working behind the scenes with the Administration and the Legislature.
- * All of the legislators who hung tough as co-sponsors of the bill:
Representatives Geraldo Alicea, Demetrius Atsalis, William Brownsberger, Jennifer Callahan, Christine Canavan, Steven D'Amico, Vincent deMacedo, Christopher Donelan, James Eldridge, Lewis Evangelidis, Michael Festa, David Flynn, William Galvin, Anne Gobi, William Green, Denis Guyer, Brad Hill, Donald Humason, Frank Hynes, Bradley H. Jones, Louis Kafka, John Keenan, Kay Khan, Peter Kocot, Robert Koczera, Stephen Kulik, William Lantigua, John Lepper, David Linsky, Barbara L'Italien, Paul Loscocco, Matthew Patrick, Alice Peisch, Jeff Perry, Douglas Petersen, Smitty Pignatelli, Denise Provost, Robert Rice, Michael Rodrigues, Michael Rush, Tom Sannicandro, John Scibak, Carl Sciortino, Frank Smizik, Todd Smola, Theodore Speliotis, Christopher Speranzo, Joyce A. Spiliotis, Harriett Stanley, Thomas Stanley, Ellen Story, David Sullivan, Walter Timilty, Timothy Toomey, Eric Turkington, Cleon Turner, Anthony Verga, Patricia Walrath, Martha Walz, Alice Wolf

Senators Steve Brewer, Robert Hedlund, Brian Joyce, Michael Knapik, Richard Moore, Robert O'Leary, Marc Pacheco, Stan Roseneberg, Bruce Tarr, James Timilty

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- * Please convey your thanks via a quick note, e-mail, or phone message to the Governor and your legislators for their firm support of our state's environmental programs. And as this capital funding shows results over the next few years, don't hesitate to show them how and where, their investments are paying off. When your Rep. or Senator is home in the district, take them out to a parcel of land protected by bond money, whether it's a park, wildlife management area, or conservation land. You can find your Rep. and Senator's contact info below :

House: <http://www.mass.gov/legis/memmenuh.htm>

Senate: <http://www.mass.gov/legis/memmenus.htm>

And while we will still have to make sure each year that the Administration allocates at least \$50 million annually to land protection from the Bond authorization, right now we have to stop and take the time to appreciate our victory and celebrate the fact that we have a Governor who listens to us and supports our cause and a Legislature that is willing to take bold steps to protect our environment and quality of life.

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