



The Trustees  
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## 2015-16 STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

“The Trustees preserves, for public use and enjoyment, properties of exceptional scenic, historic, and ecological value in Massachusetts.”

**State operating budget:** Funding for state environmental programs is critical to ensuring that environmental laws and regulations are effectively implemented and that our natural resources are protected or sustainably managed. We support 1% of the state budget for the environment.

### ***An Act to sustain community preservation revenue (SB1459/HB2587)***

Senator Cynthia Stone Creem; Representative Stephen Kulik

To date, 158 communities across the Commonwealth have adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA). With the CPA, over 21,000 acres of land, including many farms, have been protected, 1,250 outdoor recreation projects have been initiated, 3,600 appropriations for historic preservation projects have been made, and 8,500 affordable housing units have been created or supported. The Community Preservation Trust provides annual matching funds to all CPA communities to make these types of projects possible. The Fund derives its revenues from fees collected at the Registries of Deeds. Due to the popularity of the Act, and the decline in real estate transactions over the past few years, the annual distribution for CPA communities will drop below 20% in 2015, a record low. This legislation will bolster local aid for CPA municipalities by adjusting the document recording fees at the Registries of Deeds in Massachusetts with a goal of all municipalities receiving at least a 50% match. Since CPA was enacted in 2001, the recording fee has never been adjusted.

### ***An Act providing for the establishment of a comprehensive adaptation management plan in response to climate change (CAMP) (SB451/HB752)***

Senator Marc Pacheco; Representative Frank Smizik

In order to meet the challenges of a warming climate, and the changes and volatility that it brings, the Commonwealth must prepare in a coordinated cross-agency manner. This legislation requires Massachusetts to develop a comprehensive plan to manage climate change impacts, such as extreme temperatures, more intense rainfall, and rising seas and storm surges, all of which impact public health, safety, infrastructure, natural resources, and the economy.

### ***An Act relative to land conservation incentives (HB2585)***

Representative Stephen Kulik

The Massachusetts Conservation Land Tax Credit (CLTC) Program, passed by the legislature in 2009, is one of the most successful state programs for protection of important conservation and agricultural lands. The CLTC allows taxpayers a refundable conservation land tax credit for qualified donations of certified land to a public or private conservation agency. The credit is subject to an annual \$2 million cap and is equal to 50% of the fair market value of the qualified donation up to a maximum credit of \$75,000 for each qualified donation. The certification process is conducted by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) for land that is permanently protected and has significant conservation value, such as farming or forestry, wildlife protection or water quality. As currently structured, it does not have the capacity to meet demand. There is a two or more year waiting list. This legislation would raise the annual cap from \$2 million to \$5 million per year.

### ***An Act to protect the natural resources of the Commonwealth/Public Lands Preservation Act (SB402/HB623)***

Senator James Eldridge; Representative Ruth Balseer

Many bills come before the legislature seeking to transfer public natural resource lands, protected by Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution, for other purposes. This legislation would help ensure no net loss of these protected lands by requiring that owners proposing changes in use of or disposition of any Article 97 land provide information to the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs for review and consideration and, in most circumstances, provide replacement land.

Since Charles Eliot established The Trustees in 1891, we have always been about people and place. We have long sought to improve the quality of life that Massachusetts residents enjoy, and we believe everyone should have access to special places that cherish and celebrate nature, history and heritage. With our 100,000 members we care for 114 properties—over 25,000 irreplaceable acres, including 70 miles of coastline.