

Subject Line: Legislative Action Alert: LAST CALL FOR PLPA!

Support the Public Lands Preservation Act (PLPA), with Senator Eldridge's Amendment!

An Act preserving open space in the Commonwealth (S.2820) + amendment number 1
In 1972, Massachusetts voters approved Article 97 of the state constitution to provide greater protection for open space lands such as parks, conservation areas, forests, and watershed lands. Today, we have an opportunity to ensure that the intent of that constitutional provision is fully realized and protected into the future.

The *Public Lands Preservation Act* was approved by the House, but we need it to move through the Senate this week. A favorable outcome in the Senate would be a major milestone towards this bill becoming law!

We need your support - contact your state Senator today!

The benefits of preserving open space cannot be understated - it is critical to public health, recreation, air and water quality, ecosystems, watersheds, and our ability to adapt to climate change. Preserving open space improves climate resilience by helping to reduce stormwater runoff, mitigate flooding, and reduce heat island effects.

This bill would ensure that we don't lose critical open spaces--for example, a small pocket park in an otherwise highly developed area--that are playing such an important role in reducing flooding, cleaning the air and water, and mitigating heat islands.

The details:

S.2820, the Massachusetts' Senate's version of *An Act preserving open space in the Commonwealth* (H.851, also known as the *Public Lands Preservation Act*), would require "no net loss" of lands or easements protected under Article 97, meaning that replacement land of comparable acreage, location, and natural resource value would have to be provided for each disposition. It would also require that alternatives to a proposed disposition be examined and promote transparency by requiring notice to the public of any proposed dispositions before they occur.

<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/192/S2820>

We strongly support passage of this bill **with** the amendment filed by Senator Eldridge, which would remove language that would weaken the bill and ensure that any Article 97 lands that are converted to another use are replaced with *real estate (not cash)* of comparable value. Our public open spaces should not be up for sale! This week we need your help to call and/or write your state senator to pass PLPA. The legislators are busy with the Climate Bill S.2819; tell them PLPA is a climate bill too. Save our open space!

CALL OR WRITE TO YOUR SENATOR TODAY (OR WEDNESDAY) April 12 -13, 2022.

Sample email/call language:

Dear Senator _____:

The Senate will be taking up S.2820, *An Act preserving open space in the Commonwealth* (also known as the *Public Lands Preservation Act*) later this week.

I urge you to vote in favor of S.2820, with Senator Eldridge's amendment (amendment number 1).

It is more important than ever to protect our open space because these lands:

- protect air and water quality,
- improve public health,
- provide recreational opportunities,
- support ecosystems and watersheds, and perhaps most important,
- are critical to our ability to adapt to climate change.

Senator Eldridge's amendment ensures that the intent of the bill is preserved by eliminating language that would allow cash payments in lieu of identifying replacement open space—essentially putting our open spaces up for sale.

Let's finally enact the Public Lands Preservation Act and ensure that our open spaces are fully protected for current and future generations.

Sincerely,

FIND YOUR LEGISLATOR <https://malegislature.gov/Search/FindMyLegislator>

SPREAD THE WORD – the more calls and emails this week, the better!

Thank you for your support and for all that you do to protect the environment. – Dot McGlincy, MACC Executive Director