

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Senator Gobi Announces Rattlesnake Working Group**

**BOSTON – Senator Anne M. Gobi (D-Spencer)** has announced the members of the working group tasked with overseeing the public outreach on the plan to create a timber rattlesnake colony on Mt. Zion Island in the Quabbin Reservoir.

The working group was approved by the Fisheries and Wildlife Board today during their monthly board meeting.

“I appreciate that the Fish and Wildlife Board understands the importance of the formation of a working group to discuss in detail, the many issues surrounding the proposal to introduce rattlesnakes at the Quabbin,” said Senator Gobi, Co-Chair of the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture. “I look forward to being an active participant in the proceedings.”

The group will consist of the following members:

- Dr. Joseph Larson, member Fisheries and Wildlife Board
  - *Dr. Larson will serve as Chair of the working group*
- Commissioner of the Department of Fish and Game
- Commissioner of the Department of Conservation and Wildlife
- Director of the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife
- Senator Anne Gobi
- Senator Eric Lesser
- Representative Susannah Whipps Lee
- Dan Hammock, Quabbin Fishermen’s Association -
- Tony Brighenti, North Worcester County Quabbin Anglers and QWAC –
- Nancy Talbot, Selectperson and Town Clerk, Town of Ware -

- William Barnett Town of Belchertown appointee
- David Small, Athol Bird and Nature Club -
- Dr. Mike Jones, State Herpetologist
- Dr. Alan Richmond, Department of Biology, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

According to a letter from Secretary Beaton to Chairwoman Gobi and Chairman Schmid dated May 24, 2016, the goals of the group will be “to engage with the members of this Committee, the public and environmental stakeholders about the best way to protect this endangered species, consistent with the charge of the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act. Through this working group we seek to engage in a dialogue about the merit, location, and timeline associated with preserving timber rattlesnakes across the Commonwealth in a manner which does not jeopardize public safety or access.

“Over the next few weeks the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and the Department of Fish and Game will engage legislators and stakeholders from the Quabbin Regional to collaboratively discuss the composition and timeline of the working group.”

The letter goes on to say, “We commit to convening working group sessions in communities within the Quabbin Region to ensure local officials and residents will have the opportunity to participate in this process. If there remains an elevated level of concern after extensive engagement we will collectively explore alternative options.”

Senator Gobi announced opposition to the plan following the May 10<sup>th</sup> oversight hearing convened by the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture, of which she is Senate Chair.

For more information please contact Senator Gobi’s office at 617-722-1540.

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