

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Gobi Leads in Restoring Environmental and Agriculture Funding

Boston, MA – As the Massachusetts House of Representatives debated their funding proposals for the Fiscal Year 2015 Budget, State Representative Anne Gobi (D-Spencer) was instrumental in restoring funding in the House Budget for key environmental and agricultural programs. Gobi's efforts to support these important programs resulted in the restoration of funding in essential line items.

Rep. Gobi was able to secure \$1,629,860 for the operation of the Toxics Use Reduction Institute (TURI) program at UMass-Lowell. TURI provides resources and tools to help make the Commonwealth a safer and more sustainable place to live and work. The institute collaborates with businesses, community organizations and government agencies to reduce the use of toxic chemicals, protect public health and the environment, and increase competitiveness of Massachusetts businesses.

Rep. Gobi was also advocated for \$80,000 to help run the Massachusetts apiary inspection program. The honey bee industry benefits the Commonwealth's fruit and vegetable industry by providing pollination services that ensure fruitful crops. Apiary inspectors assist Massachusetts beekeepers by inspecting hives to check for diseases and/or pests.

Rep. Gobi worked with Representative Matthew Beaton to establish funding for a Buy Local initiative for Central Massachusetts. "There are 1,547 farms in Worcester County and finding additional outlets for their farm products benefits everyone," commented Rep. Gobi

Statewide 4-H Program funding was also a priority of Rep. Gobi. Her advocacy played an important part in the program's inclusion the House Budget. Massachusetts 4-H is a youth development program open to young people ages 5-18. The program is part of a nationwide system connected to their respective land-grant institution of higher education, providing incredible access to resources and a wealth of curriculum. The Massachusetts 4-H program is based at UMass Amherst and has offices in seven different regions throughout the state.

"As Chair of the Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Committee I was pleased to advocate for these important programs," stated Gobi. "I appreciate the widespread bi-partisan support to see the passage of these items."

Other noted items included in the energy and environment section of the House budget included:

- \$15 million for the Emergency Food Assistance Program (\$1 million increase) estimated to provide 17 million meals in FY 2015
- \$27.2 million for the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental affairs to lead its six departments while supporting the Office of Environmental Law Enforcement
- \$79.2 million for the Department of Conservation and Recreation to maintain the Commonwealth's vast networks of parks, watershed, and recreational facilities
- \$57 million for the Department of Environmental Protection to protect the residents and natural resources of Massachusetts by reducing air, water, and land pollution
- A number of local projects that will allow municipalities across the state to implement plans to maintain lakes, ponds, rivers, and reservoirs, as well as walking trails and parks
- A new line item for the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to coordinate and implement strategies for climate change adaptation and preparedness funded at \$1 million
- \$125,000 for the redemptions centers line item within the Department of Environmental Protection to expand the recycling and solid waste master plan
- \$57,000 increase to the Office of Dam Safety
- \$350,000 for the Department of Conservation and Recreation to control aquatic invasive species across the state
- \$450,000 for the Division of Marine Fisheries, through the Marine Fisheries Institute, I collaboration with the School for Marine Science Technology at UMass Dartmouth, to assess the biomass of fish in Massachusetts waters

Gobi has long advocated for programs essential to the environment. She is in her fourth year as Chair of the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture. The House unanimously passed \$5.8 million in energy and environmental budget amendments.

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