

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
June 6, 2015

Office of Senator Marc R. Pacheco
617-722-1551

**JOINT COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND
AGRICULTURE PASSES BILL TO PROTECT COMMONWEALTH'S ECONOMY,
NATURAL AND BUILT INFRASTRUCTURE FROM CLIMATE CHANGE**

BOSTON—State Sen. President Pro Tempore Marc R. Pacheco (D-Taunton), Chair of the Senate Committee on Global Warming and Climate Change, is pleased to announce the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture on Tuesday passed out favorably a bill he filed to establish a comprehensive climate change adaptation management plan in the Commonwealth.

The bill, cosponsored by State Rep. Frank Smizik (D-Brookline), Chairman of the House Committee on Global Warming and Climate Change, would establish an adaptation management plan through a collaboration led by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security. Chairman Smizik filed a separate version of the bill in the House, which is now carried by Senator Pacheco's bill. Combined, the bills have over 50 cosponsors.

The plan would codify for all future administrations the goals, priorities and principles for resiliency, preservation, protection, restoration and enhancement of the Commonwealth's built and natural infrastructure, based on data around existing and projected climate change impacts including temperature changes, drought, inland flooding and sea level rise.

"As this bill moves forward with the committee's support today, Massachusetts continues to set an example for other states to follow when it comes to innovative climate policy that will strengthen our environment, our economy and our infrastructure," said Pacheco. "I'd like to thank the co-chairs of the committee, Senator Anne Gobi and Representative Paul Schmid, for recognizing the importance of establishing a management plan for this administration and all future administrations to follow that will defend the Commonwealth against the many threats of climate change."

"This innovative policy puts Massachusetts on the forefront in combating climate change not only in the present but for future generations to come," said Representative Paul A. Schmid (D-Westport). "I sincerely thank Senator Pacheco for his leadership and continued efforts to preserve our state's greatest resource, the environment." Senator Anne Gobi (D-Spencer) said "This is an important bill for the Commonwealth. I appreciate Senator Pacheco's advocacy and commitment to making Massachusetts a leader in environmental causes."

"Creating regional climate adaptation plans for the Commonwealth is imperative in ensuring public safety and economic resiliency in our communities," said Representative Smizik. "Climate change is happening now and our towns are vulnerable. With the movement of S.451/H.752 from the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resource, and Agriculture to the Senate, we are one step closer to understanding how climate change is affecting individual communities across Massachusetts and creating plans protecting ourselves against these threats."

Through the legislation, an interagency advisory committee would be established through the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security charged with producing a report that documents the preparedness and vulnerabilities in the Commonwealth's emergency response, energy, transportation, communications, health and other systems. The advisory committee would put forth a proposal that establishes and commits to sound management practices while compiling data on existing and projected sea level rise using the best available science.

The legislation aims to provide municipalities and regional planning agencies tools to conduct inventory and vulnerability assessments by providing technical and financial assistance for planning efforts that consider the impacts of climate change on human and natural resources. It also allows for a regional comprehensive adaptation management plan grant program that would aid the development of regional adaptation plans.

The legislation also creates a coastal buy-back program authorizing the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to acquire, by voluntary purchase, property abutting areas subject to tides or barrier beaches, or is located in velocity zones of flood plain areas that contain structures repeatedly damaged by severe weather.

For more information, contact Pacheco's office at 617-722-1551, visit his Facebook page at www.facebook.com/PachecoFanPage or follow Pacheco on Twitter (@MarcRPacheco).

###