

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Gobi Announces Funding for Local Projects, Raw Milk Delivery in Passage of Environmental Bond Bill

BOSTON – Today, **Senator Anne M. Gobi (D-Spencer)** and the Massachusetts Senate passed *H.4613, An Act promoting climate change adaptation, environmental and natural resource protection, and investment in recreational assets and opportunity*, colloquially known as the ‘environmental bond bill.’ The legislation authorizes the issuance of more than \$2 billion in bonds to implement climate change adaptation programs and to improve existing climate resilient infrastructure.

“A goal of the Environmental Bond Bill is to preserve our natural resources and promote economic growth, while at the same time maintaining fiscal responsibility,” commented Senator Gobi, who chairs the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture. “We are fortunate in Massachusetts, especially in our area, to have so many wonderful natural resources that make our region an ideal place to live and work. This bill is a prime example of how Massachusetts continues to lead in environmental stewardship; strengthening our commitment to the environment, while maintaining our ability to address our budget needs.”

Massachusetts has continually demonstrated leadership in the fight against global climate change, and the investments authorized in this legislation ensure that cities and towns across the Commonwealth are protected and that public spaces and infrastructure are improved and maintained for the public good.

Senator Gobi secured bond authorization funding for the following town projects through the bill:

- \$5,000,000 for water infrastructure projects in the town of Hardwick.
- \$2,000,000 expended for water and sewer improvements in the town of Palmer
- \$2,000,000 for extensions to the public water line in the town of Sturbridge.

- \$25,000 for improvements to Turkey Hill Pond in the town of Rutland.
- \$25,000 for improvements to Demond Hill Pond in the town of Rutland.
- \$120,000 for improvements to O’Gara Park in the town of Spencer, including but not limited to the construction of a fieldhouse and improvements to the grandstand.
- \$10,000 for improvements to Powder Mill Park in the town of Spencer.
- \$5,000 for improvements to Luther Hill Park in the town of Spencer.
- \$300,000 expended for engineering, improvements and repairs to the Hamilton Reservoir dam in the town of Holland.
- \$200,000 for improvements to the Queen Lake Dam in the town of Phillipston
- \$15,000 for the construction of a new well to provide drinking water for the Phillipston Town Hall.
- \$100,000 for improvements to Howe State Park in the town of Spencer.
- \$100,000 for improvements to Moore State Park in the Town of Paxton.
- \$100,000 for drainage pipe improvements on Stoddard Place in the town of North Brookfield.

The bill also re-authorizes the following projects included in related legislation passed in 2014:

- \$5,000,000 for a dredging project on Lake Wickaboag in West Brookfield
- \$4,400,000 for Whitney Pond Dam in Winchendon
- \$100,000 for handicap access improvements to the Woodward Fishing area on South Pond in Brookfield
- \$80,000 for Thompson Pond and \$50,000 for Stiles Pond in Spencer

In addition to local project funding, Senator Gobi also ensured a boost to Massachusetts Dairy producers in the bill by including an amendment establishing a regulatory framework for the allowance of off-premise raw milk distribution, including through CSA agreements. If this is signed into law, Massachusetts will join sixteen other states to allow raw milk distribution including Connecticut, Vermont, Maine and New Hampshire.

The bill also provides \$10 million in funding the Lakes and Ponds Program at the Department of Conservation and Recreation. This money can be used for technical assistance, studies, improvements and removal of invasive species in lakes, ponds, and watersheds across the commonwealth.

Additionally, the bill also requires the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security to: (i) coordinate to strengthen resilience and prepare for the impacts of climate change; (ii) publish, every five years, an integrated state climate adaptation and hazard mitigation plan; (iii) establish frameworks for state agency and municipal vulnerability assessments that will be incorporated into the state plan; and (iv) implement the state plan and incorporate information learned from implementing the state plan in plan updates.

The Senate bill was offered as an amendment to the environmental bond bill passed by the House of Representatives in June. The bill will now be reconciled with the House version through a conference committee to work out the differences between the two bills.

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

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