



## MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

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### *Poaching Prevention Bill Clears Senate*

BOSTON — The Massachusetts Senate passed legislation on Thursday to enhance wildlife protections and to strengthen penalties against poaching in the Commonwealth. The bill, filed by Senator Michael O. Moore (D-Millbury), updates existing anti-poaching laws which have remained widely unchanged since the 1930s.

“As a former environmental police officer, and as an avid outdoorsman, I recognize that poaching is not only a concern for animal protection advocates and conservationists, but also law-abiding hunters,” **said Senator Moore**. “Poachers cheat the system and gain an unfair advantage over lawful hunters. This bill will give law enforcement officers new tools to prevent poaching and to hold offenders accountable for their criminal acts.”

In an effort to adequately deter illegal hunting practices, the legislation elevates existing penalties for individuals convicted of illegally harming or killing wildlife. The legislation also requires the Commonwealth to enter into a nationwide law enforcement network known as the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact. Massachusetts remains one of only two nonmember states. The Compact allows for reciprocity with other states for the purpose of license suspensions to prevent wildlife violators who have lost their hunting, trapping or fishing privileges from circumventing license revocations

“This legislation is an essential effort to modernize the Commonwealth’s hunting laws,” **said Senate President Harriette L. Chandler (D-Worcester)**. “It’s time for Massachusetts to join the ranks of the forty-eight other states who have come together to better enforce poaching laws across the country.”

“I appreciate the leadership of Senator Moore and I was glad to work with him on this important measure,” **said Senator Anne M. Gobi (D-Spencer)**, who serves as Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture. “This bill updates poaching laws and sends a clear message that ethical hunting is of paramount importance and protects the rights of sportsmen and women in Massachusetts.”

Additional provisions of the legislation include:

- Requiring the borders of wildlife sanctuaries to be posted to provide notice to the public of the designation of the land as a sanctuary;
- Elevates penalties for illegally hunting bears, bobcats and endangered species, including the penalty for hunting bears and bobcats with the aid of a dog or baiting to a range from \$1,000 to \$5,000 and up to one year imprisonment;
- Distinguishes between violations of hunting laws when determining the length of time a license may be suspended; and,
- Any person who hunts, traps or fishes in Massachusetts after the person's privilege has been revoked anywhere else in the United States or Canada shall be considered in violation of the General Laws of the Commonwealth.

The bill will now go to the House of Representatives for consideration. A similar legislative initiative passed the Senate in 2016, however, the bill was ultimately not considered by the House of Representatives. To continue tracking the legislation, S.2248, please visit the Legislature's website, [www.malegislature.gov](http://www.malegislature.gov).

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