

HOUSE No. 314

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Bud L. Williams

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act to establish the Western Massachusetts balanced sustainable development commission.

PETITION OF:

| NAME: | DISTRICT/ADDRESS: | DATE ADDED: |
|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Bud L. Williams</i> | <i>11th Hampden</i> | <i>1/6/2025</i> |

HOUSE No. 314

By Representative Williams of Springfield, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 314) of Bud L. Williams for legislation to establish the Western Massachusetts balanced sustainable development commission. Community Development and Small Businesses.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 242 OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)

An Act to establish the Western Massachusetts balanced sustainable development commission.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 Section 1. Whereas the Western portion of Massachusetts, specifically the Pioneer
2 Valley has different characteristics than the Eastern portion, in terms of population density, types
3 of industry, access of population to undeveloped land, visibility to the Boston media, and so
4 forth, and

5 Whereas over time thee different characteristics have led to differentials in the impacts of
6 policies and programs adopted from time to in the area of housing, fair housing, school
7 integration, regional transportation, taxation, and economic development, and

8 Whereas this differential impact may have played some part in the fact that this Western
9 portion of Massachusetts, now defined as the Springfield Region, has been Nationally recognized

as having a generally high level of racial segregation, including the highest level of White-Hispanic segregation in the United States, and

Whereas this same area has also underperformed in comparison with the Eastern portion of the Commonwealth in terms of its ability to implement modern sustainability strategies such as mass transportation, balanced housing, and economic development in general, then

Section 2. Therefore it is resolved that this Western Massachusetts Balanced Sustainable Development Act is hereby adopted by the Massachusetts General Court to implement the following measures:

1. To mandate that a regional Sustainable Development Commission be created consisting of representatives of regional planning agencies in Hampden, Hampshire, and Franklin Counties together with representatives of organizations concerned with fair housing, organized labor, and chambers of commerce or similar organizations concerned with economic development recognized by the General Court in the impacted area to annually track and assess the impact of State policies on the Springfield Region and make recommendations to the General Court for appropriate modifications of these policies, and recommendations as to the appropriateness of pending legislation and other policies of the Commonwealth which may have a differential effect on the Region; and

2. To further mandate that the said Commission devise strategies of remediation or plans to counter any negative impacts of past policies of the Commonwealth so as to create a more racially and economically integrated, economically vital, and environmentally sustainable region in the future; and

3. To further mandate and authorize creation of a special, tax-exempt, urban and regional development corporation, to be controlled jointly by regional elected officials, representatives of business organizations, and representatives of organized labor, which shall have the power make contracts, acquire property through eminent domain, buy and sell bonds, as it sees appropriate to implement development programs and projects required to implement the remediation strategies and/or plans developed by the Sustainable Development Commission to create more balanced housing, more effective development in the fields of commercial or industrial development, or other development as it the Commission may determine based on its research and consultation with the populace and institutions of the Springfield Region and/or Pioneer Valley.