

HOUSE No. 744

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Anne M. Gobi (BY REQUEST)

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 passage of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to the Forest Stewardship Incentive Program.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Mike Leonard

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

35 Leighton Road
Petersham, MA 01366

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Nine

AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE FOREST STEWARDSHIP INCENTIVE PROGRAM.

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. Section 2A of Chapter 312 of the Acts of 2008, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
2 striking line item 2800-7022 in its entirety and inserting in place thereof the following line item:--
3 “2800-7022.. For the purpose of protecting and conserving the ecological and economic integrity of the
4 commonwealth's privately held forestlands, including but not limited to acquisition of interests in land
5 including easements, agreements, rights of first refusal and covenants; for a forestry conservation
6 restriction program to acquire conservation restrictions under section 31 of chapter 184 for private
7 working forests actively devoted to sustainable forestry, and classified as forest land under section 2 of
8 chapter 61 of the General Laws, in order to encourage sustainable forestry, protect prime forest land, and
9 help the viability and affordability of sustainable forestry; provided, that working forest conservation
10 restrictions shall be held by the department of agriculture or the department of conservation and
11 recreation or the municipality in which the land is located; provided further, that projects shall be rated
12 based on the suitability of land to grow forest products, the fair market value of the land as determined by
13 independent appraisers, proximity to other protected working forests, management history of the project
14 to serve as a model of sustainable forestry and the degree to which the conservation restriction would
15 serve to preserve and make affordable the practice of sustainable forestry in the commonwealth; and for
16 grants to public and non-public organizations and private landowners for education, technical assistance,
17 forest stewardship practices, enhancement of ecosystem services and carbon sequestration, estate
18 planning, interests in land or associated land acquisition costs; grants to private forest landowners, forest
19 businesses and non-profits for the forest viability program for enhancing sustainable economic benefits of
20 forests, including business plans and implementation grants and no-development covenants to be held by
21 the department of agriculture or the department of conservation and recreation, including but not limited
22 to forest management plans for private landowners; provided, that projects and funding shall be approved

23 by the secretary of energy and environmental affairs; and provided further, that projects may be carried
24 out in cooperation with other governmental agencies, private landowners, and conservation organizations
25 according to management agreements approved by the secretary, and provided further, that not less than
26 \$500,000 shall be expended annually for new Chapter 61 Forest Management/Forest Stewardship
27 Plans..... \$4,000,000”