



February 10, 2018

Vice Chair DiDomenico
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Sal.DiDomenico@masenate.gov

Re: Public Lands Preservation Act (PLPA, S. 2181)

Dear Vice Chair DiDomenico:

On behalf of the Mystic River Watershed Association, I am writing to communicate MyRWA's support for the Public Lands Preservation Act (PLPA, S. 2181), a bill which would provide needed protection for our public parks, playgrounds, forests, and other natural resource land covered by Article 97 of the state constitution.

We urge you and your colleagues on the Senate Committee on Ways and Means to issue a favorable report on the PLPA as soon as possible.

The PLPA would codify in law the state's no-net-loss policy, which requires replacement land whenever Article 97 land is changed in use or disposed of. This would insure that the policy could not be swept away by a new administration, as has happened to some National Monument boundaries rolled back by the administration in Washington.

The bill would also clarify and add transparency to the Article 97 land disposition process, providing efficiency and potential cost savings for municipalities.

This legislation is important to MyRWA's thousands of members, volunteers and supporters because we work to protect and restore a wide range of beloved and well-used public lands along the Mystic River and its tributaries, including the Malden and Chelsea Rivers. From the Middlesex Fells and Mystic River Reservation, to urban parks such as the Mary O'Malley Park in Chelsea and Condor Street Urban Wild in East Boston, the Mystic watershed public

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lands provide priceless opportunities for outdoor recreation, flood storage and wildlife habitat, and economic value to private landowners and businesses in our communities. MyRWA has been instrumental as a partner with government in improving water quality, restoring natural areas, and creating trails, parks, boating and other recreation facilities on these public lands. We do not want to lose these hard-won, precious resources.

Please report out the PLPA favorably and as soon as possible.

Thank you for considering our comments on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patrick Herron". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P".

Patrick Herron
Executive Director
Mystic River Watershed Association

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