

# Commonwealth Report

Volume XLV

January 2008

A  
Newsletter  
for the  
Citizens of  
the First  
Plymouth  
and Bristol  
District

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## Welcoming 2008!

Welcome to the January edition of the **Commonwealth Report!**

I hope you are enjoying the wintry weather and the transition into 2008. The New Year is off to a busy start here on Beacon Hill!

This month, the Senate took action on two very important pieces of legislation, the Safer Alternatives Act and the Clean Energy Bill, that make the public's health, the envi-

ronment, and our economy top priorities in 2008.

And although the holidays may be over, the Commonwealth keeps on giving.

This month, I am happy to report that multi-million dollar grants were awarded to local Councils On Aging and to cities and towns throughout our community.

I hope you enjoy this month's edition of The Commonwealth Report and

please tune in to hear the latest updates from Beacon Hill aired on the radio version of the Commonwealth Report broadcast on WBVF 1530 AM at 10:30 a.m. on Monday and Friday.

Enjoy the snowy weather and this month's newsletter. I look forward to hearing from you.

All the best!



## Grant Money Benefits Seniors

Senator Pacheco is pleased to announce that the Executive Office of Elder Affairs awarded Formula Grants to Councils on Aging (COAs) in 349 cities and towns in Massachusetts, including nine communities in the First Plymouth and Bristol District.

"Councils on Aging help to alleviate many of the stresses

senior citizens face every day," said Senator Pacheco. "The grants awarded by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs will help to ensure that our region's most vulnerable citizens are provided with the best services, facilities, and wellness programs to enhance their quality of life."

Local communities will use the

funding for various programs, such as wellness and health screenings; staffing; and community outreach. More than \$160,000 was awarded to the towns of Berkeley, Bridgewater, Carver, Dighton, Marion, Middleboro, Raynham, Wareham and the City of Taunton.

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# Senate Approves Clean Energy Bill

The slogans ‘going green’, the green economy, and clean energy, have become a way of life.

And lawmakers this month passed legislation that would bring Massachusetts to the forefront of living the green movement.

An Act to Generate Renewable Energy and Efficiency Now (S2468), also dubbed the Green Act, promotes renewable energy resources and energy efficiency throughout the Commonwealth.

The bill would help ease energy costs in cities and towns by allowing mu-

nicipalities to construct, own and operate small renewable energy generation sources.

“Today we brought Massachusetts one step closer to securing a position at the forefront of the renewable energy movement,” said Senator Pacheco, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Global Warming and Climate Change. “This far-reaching legislation is an important piece of a comprehensive environmental agenda aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, developing innovative renewable energy technology, and promoting energy efficiency and conservation measures. The Green Act and the Global

Warming Solutions Act provide the necessary building blocks to ensure the continued protection of our environment, our economy and the citizens of the Commonwealth.”

The Global Warming Solutions Act (S534), sponsored by Senator Pacheco, would set the stringent greenhouse gas emissions standards necessary to protect the citizens and the environment of the Commonwealth.

The Joint Committee on the Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture reported The Global Warming Solutions Act favorably from the Committee.

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# Senate Approves Safer Alternatives Bill

Concerned about toxic chemicals in household items? Worry no more. This month the Senate approved sweeping legislation that would promote safer alternatives in products, such as cleaning products and cosmetics, manufactured and sold in Massachusetts.

“Today we strengthened our commitment to protecting the public’s health,

making the well being and safety of Massachusetts citizens a top priority,” said Senator Pacheco. “This legislation will safeguard children, families and individuals against the unknown and harmful dangers posed by toxic chemicals that are present in our everyday lives.”

The legislation would authorize the Toxic Uses Re-

duction Institute (TURI) at UMASS Lowell to conduct annual assessments of existing substances in an effort to identify those that are the most toxic.

The legislation also would allow the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to specify toxins that can be replaced by safer alternatives.

# Pacheco Supports Proper Care for Alzheimer's Patients

Senator Pacheco, vice-chair of the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing, joined top leaders from across the Commonwealth to show his support for the proper care and treatment of patients suffering from Alzheimer's disease.

Senator Pacheco addressed more than 100 legislators, members of the Alzheimer's Association, and friends and relatives of patients suffering from the disease who attended the Alzheimer's Advocacy Action Day at the State House.

"Affecting more than 120,000 people here in Massachusetts, Alzheimer's disease impacts the lives of the

individual, their families and our society," said Senator Pacheco. "Right now we do not have an adequate, uniform set of guidelines to provide the best quality care for patients suffering from Alzheimer's and dementia. I have sponsored legislation to ensure that all patients suffering from Alzheimer's will receive the best quality care at long-term care facilities. The overwhelming support at today's event helps bring us one step closer to reaching this goal."

The legislation, An Act Relative To Dementia Special Care Units In Long-Term Care Facilities, would establish a uniform set of

standards for the care and treatment of Alzheimer's patients. Included in the bill are training and education requirements for staff at long-term care facilities, as well as requirements for program policies and procedures.

Senate Bill 425 was recently reported favorably from the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing.

The event was also attended by Commissioner of Public Health John Auerbach, Speaker of the House Sal DiMasi, and President/CEO Alzheimer's Association Massachusetts Chapter James Wessler.

## Business And Economic Advisory Council Update

This month, members of the Senator's Business and Economic Advisory Council convened at Benjamin's Restaurant in Taunton to discuss budget issues and job creation during the Council's fifth meeting.

More than 70 top business and community

leaders from throughout the region were present at the January 31 luncheon.

Senator Steven Panagiotakos (D-Lowell), Chairman of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, delivered the keynote speech. Earlier in the day, Senator Panagiotakos took a tour of the area and said he

was very impressed by the Myles Standish Industrial Park.

Standing before the Council members, Senator Panagiotakos referred to the Myles Standish Park as a "jewel" that should serve as a best practices model for other industrial parks throughout the nation.

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*Currently, Senator Pacheco is the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Post Audit and Oversight and Chairman of the newly created Senate Committee on Global Warming and Climate Change. He is also the Vice Chair of the Joint Committee on the Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture and Vice Chair of the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing.. In addition, he is a member of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means and the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy. During his tenure in the Senate, Senator Pacheco has chaired the Joint Committees on Commerce and Labor, State Administration, Health Care and Natural Resources and Agriculture.*

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## Clean Water Projects Get A Boost

Water system improvements get a boost this year thanks to an outpour of funding from the state.

Senator Pacheco this month announced that many local cities and towns qualified for State Revolving Fund (SRF) loans to fund projects that will improve water quality, upgrade or replace aging wastewater and water supply infrastructure, and cut municipal energy use and costs.

Facilities in the First Plymouth and Bristol District received more than

\$17 million in funding.

The city of Taunton received more than \$13 million in SRF loans for pump station upgrades, water system studies planning and for water system upgrades and improvements.

More than \$1 million was awarded to the Dighton-Rehoboth Regional High School for wastewater facility upgrades and the town of Dighton received \$350,000 for wastewater management plans.

The town of Bridgewater received \$3,500,000 for completion of a drink-

ing water project along with more than \$1 million for the proper replacement of water mains.

“The State Revolving Fund will enable numerous cities and towns throughout the region to properly upgrade water systems; assess a facilities potential for clean, renewable energy sources; and ensure that our region’s infrastructure is sound,” said Senator Pacheco. “These funds will help us continue to prioritize the economy of our region and the health of our citizens.”