

Commonwealth Report

Volume XLVIV

June 2008

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

Inside this Issue:

Energy Costs Report	2
Life Science Center	3
Energy hearing	3
Green Communities Act	4
Raynham Awarded Grant	4
International Conference	6

Greetings From Senator Pacheco!

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

I hope you are enjoying the summer. As always, we are busy here on Beacon Hill!

This month the Senate approved key legislation, including the Green Communities Act. Although the energy bill will establish a framework to help alleviate the problems in the Commonwealth's energy sector,

top environmental leaders and policymakers support the Global Warming Solutions Act to set a strong carbon cap for Massachusetts.

This month the Post Audit and Oversight community took on the issue of rising oil costs throughout the Commonwealth. Following the hearing, the Committee published a report offering key recommendations to address the energy cri-

sis.

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.

I look forward to hearing from you.



The 24th Annual Heritage Day of Portugal

This year hundreds of individuals and families from across the Commonwealth joined at the State House to celebrate the 24th Annual Heritage Day of Portugal on June 3, 2008, when the Commonwealth's influential leaders of Portuguese-speaking heritage will be commemorated for their accomplishments and their contribution to the state's Portu-

guese communities.

"It is important to recognize the achievements of all the people who live in our state, and at this particular time of year we recognize those of our Portuguese citizens," said Senator Pacheco, chairman of the Heritage Day of Portugal Legislative Committee. "Each year I look forward to hosting this event and this

recognizing the contributions of the honorees to Portuguese communities throughout the Commonwealth."

This year's honoree from Taunton was Tony Lopes, the host of Hometown Talk Radio 1530 WBVF.

All honorees received a Heritage Day of Portugal Medallion.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON POST AUDIT AND OVERSIGHT RELEASES REPORT ON RISING ENERGY COSTS; CRISIS LOOMS IN FUEL ASSISTANCE FUNDING

The report titled “Running On Empty” lists key findings and recommendations; calls for strong economy-wide cap on use of fossil fuels, energy efficiency...and warns of dire need for future fuel assistance funding

Tired of feeling the pain at the pump? Worried about the rising costs of home heating oil? Relief may be in sight.

The Senate Post Audit and Oversight Committee recently published a report offering key findings and recommendations for the Commonwealth to cope with and begin to seriously address the energy crisis.

The report was released following a recent Committee hearing titled, *Running On Empty: Massachusetts Faces Record Energy Costs*, during which an esteemed panel of experts testified about today’s rising energy costs.

The soaring costs of fuel and oil is a complex global issue that requires a multi-tiered response. While this is mainly a federal issue, the Committee found that solutions to this complex problem require a collaborative effort from the local, state and federal government.

Giving voice to consumers across the Commonwealth, the Senate Post Audit and Oversight Committee recommends certain actions the state govern-

ment can take to promote short and long-term solutions to the rising energy costs and fuel prices.

The report urges the Commonwealth to reduce its own energy demand, pass key legislation to limit carbon emissions and promote alternative energy sources, and approve sufficient FY09 funding to ensure that citizens are able to heat their homes during the winter. Implementing the Committee’s recommendations will be a vital part in helping Massachusetts citizens cope with and begin to address the energy crisis.

Findings from the Post Audit and Oversight Committee report include:

- With heating oil prices estimated to hit \$4.46 per gallon this winter, Massachusetts must reassess its supplemental budget funding for LIHEAP, given the current energy crisis. The Committee is recommending that the state budget writers and leaders prepare to fund as

much as \$50 million or more in additional funding for fuel assistance this winter.

- Excessive speculation in the futures markets, which have gone unregulated since the end of 2000, contributes \$25 to \$50 per barrel to the price of oil.
- While some think drilling will be a “quick fix” to the current energy crisis, it is far from the long-term solution necessary to tackle this problem.
- In order to complete a comprehensive legislative package to address the energy crisis, Massachusetts must pass legislation that would provide legal authority for an economy-wide cap to reduce carbon emissions, as well as pass legislation on alternative fuels that would result in a net reduction of carbon emissions.

***A copy of the report will be posted on the Mass.gov Web site under Post Audit reports.**

SENATE APPROVES \$5 MILLION FOR LIFE SCIENCES CENTER IN THE HEART OF SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

In June, the Senate approved and the governor signed the \$1 billion Life Sciences bill, a 10-year investment plan that will provide \$5 million for the design, construction and development of a life science/education training center in Southeastern Massachusetts.

“I am thrilled that the Life Sciences bill has been signed into law and that we were able to secure \$5 million for a life science/education training center located in Taunton that will spur economic development and job growth throughout the region,” said Senator Pacheco. “The life science/education training

center will be vital in training qualified workers for jobs throughout Southeastern Massachusetts.”

The amendment, sponsored by Senator Pacheco, would provide funding for the design, construction, development and related infrastructure improvements for a life science/education training center at the former Paul A. Dever State School in Taunton.

A 13-member board of directors will manage the life sciences/education training center, which would include an education and training facility, and a laboratory research facility with state-of-the-art equipment offering research and devel-

opment facilities for collaboration with industry partners.

The Life Sciences bill is comprehensive initiative aimed at growing the Commonwealth’s life sciences sector. Other components of the bill include \$500 million in capital funding to be spent over a 10-year period; \$299.5 million in unrestricted funds for investment in public infrastructure projects, \$25 million each year for 10 years for the Massachusetts Life Sciences Investment Fund; and \$25 million each year for 10 years in tax incentives to be awarded to certified life sciences projects.

Committee Challenges Big Oil Industry Representatives

On June 3, 2008, Senator Pacheco, chairman of the Senator Committee on Post Audit and Oversight, and members of the Committee conducted a hearing to examine the energy crisis in Massachusetts and investigate actions the Commonwealth can take to curb rising fuel costs.

The hearing was the basis for the report, “Running on Empty,” which the Com-

mittee released shortly afterward.

During the hearing on June 3, 2008, the Committee challenged oil industry representatives and exposed the fact that last year Exxon Mobil made \$40 billion in profits, the largest profit in history and allotted only \$10 million for renewable energy.

Other panelists who

testified included, written testimony from Congressman Edward J. Markey, Chair of the *Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming*; Philip Giudice, Commissioner, *Massachusetts Division of Energy Resources*; Paul Hibbard, Chairman, *Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities*.

Senator Pacheco Votes to Reform Massachusetts Energy Policy

Senator Pacheco voted to approve a sweeping energy reform package that focuses on promoting and developing energy efficiency and renewable energy across the Commonwealth. The Green Communities Act was recently signed into law.

The Green Communities Act emphasizes “Efficiency First Energy Procurement” and requires distribution companies to consider all available energy resources when purchasing power. The bill also mandates that the state’s electric companies purchase the most cost-effective and stable resources, with the goal of procuring all cost-effective energy efficiency and conservation before turning to a more expensive supply from traditional sources.

“Passage of The Green Communities Act will provide lawmakers the framework on which to develop a comprehensive

legislative package that would make Massachusetts a leader in new energy technology, energy efficiency and conservation, and to begin the fight to end global warming,” said Senator Pacheco, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Global Warming and Climate Change. “The Green Communities Act tackles the problems related to the energy sector and provides the framework for the installment of solutions to the global warming problems we face. We must continue to build upon this framework and complete a comprehensive package by adopting global warming solutions included in The Global Warming Solutions Act (S.B. 2540).

Specifically for cities and towns, the legislation directs the Department of Energy Resources’ new Division of Green Communities to establish

a green communities program. This will give cities and towns the opportunity to take advantage of loans and grants provided by the state to finance the cost of energy efficiency improvements and renewable and alternative energy projects.

The bill also revamps the existing Massachusetts Renewable Energy Trust Fund, housed within the Massachusetts Technology Park Collaborative. Furthermore, the legislation establishes the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative Auction Trust Fund. The bill also would direct the state to replace state-owned and operated vehicles with more fuel-efficient vehicles, as well as Establishes a commission to examine the environmental and economic impact of instituting a green building plan for the Commonwealth.

\$1 Million Grant Awarded to Town of Raynham

Senator Pacheco was pleased to announce that the town of Raynham will receive \$1 million for the design and construction of storm water and roadway improvements for the Raynham Woods Industrial Park. These vital storm water improvements will include replacing a culvert on Hill Street to meet pollution standards, as well as measures to prevent down-

stream flooding in the area.

The funding was made available from Massachusetts Opportunity Relocation and Expansion (MORE) Jobs Capital Program, which provides grant funding for public infrastructure improvements needed to support business expansion in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

“I am thrilled that the town of Raynham will receive this significant funding from

the Massachusetts Opportunity Relocation and Expansion Jobs Capital Program to carry out these essential improvements,” said Senator Pacheco. “I am happy that working with the Patrick/Murray Administration, Representative Flynn and local officials that this funding has been secured, which will enhance Raynham’s infrastructure and expand job creation throughout the region.”

The Office of Senator Marc R. Pacheco

Massachusetts State House
Room 312-B
Boston, MA 02133
Phone: 617.722.1551
Email: mpacheco@senate.state.ma.us

4 Court Street
Taunton, MA 02780
Phone: 508.822.3000

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.

To subscribe to this
newsletter,
please e-mail Natalia Pelayo
at
Natalia.Pelayo@state.ma.us

Senator Pacheco Selected for International Conference

Senator Pacheco was one of a select handful of Americans chosen to speak at the first-ever “Franklin D. Roosevelt Transatlantic Forum,” hosted by the Azores Regional Government and the Luso-American Development Foundation.

“It brings me great honor to be chosen to represent our district in the Azores,” said Senator Pacheco. “Southeastern Massachusetts and the Azores have always had a strong cultural, economic and historical ties. This

forum is an opportunity to build upon and strengthen those existing ties between Massachusetts, particularly Southeastern Massachusetts, and the Azores.”

The forum will be held in July in the city of Ponta Delgada, on the Island of Sao Miguel, and marks the 90th anniversary of President Roosevelt’s stay in the Azores when he served as Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

Senator Pacheco was chosen to participate in the forum titled, “The

Future of Transatlantic Relations.”

The forum will promote an honest dialogue amongst policymakers to enhance the already strong economic, cultural and historical bonds between the Azores and Massachusetts.

This international conference also hosts numerous other forums including, “Economics and Social Politics –From the “New Deal” to Neo-Liberalism” and “Defence and Security in the Transatlantic Relations.”