

Commonwealth Report

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

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Greetings From Senator Pacheco!

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

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

This month the Massachusetts Legislature approved the Global Warming Solutions Act and other key pieces of legislation before the two-year legislative session came to an end.

The Global

Warming Solutions Act was passed shortly after the Senate Committee on Post Audit and Oversight released a report warning of the severe impacts global warming and climate change would have on Massachusetts if left unchecked.

While global warming heated up discussion at the State House, the Senator's Business and Economic Advisory Council addressed the region's

economy with Governor Deval Patrick.

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



Town of Wareham Receives Grant

This month the town of Wareham was awarded an \$800,000 federal Community Development Block Grant to help in the design and housing rehabilitation for fifteen units, as well as code enforcements and public services.

"I am thrilled to report that the town of Wareham has received this significant amount of funding to help communities in the area continue to flourish and ensure the protection

and safety of our region's citizens," said Senator Pacheco. "I'd like to thank Congressman Barney Frank, and Senators John Kerry and Ted Kennedy for their help to secure this grant."

The federal funds are targeted to support community revitalization, meet the housing and service needs of low- and moderate-income people and build and repair infrastructure vital to the health and safety

of all residents.

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is the Commonwealth's largest available resource to provide municipalities with resources to implement community and economic development projects, and funds are distributed by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development to cities and towns with populations of less than 50,000.

MASSACHUSETTS APPROVES LANDMARK GLOBAL WARMING BILL

Implements far-reaching greenhouse gas reductions; Positions Massachusetts as a leader in reducing global warming impacts

On July 31, 2008, the Massachusetts Legislature approved landmark legislation to protect the Commonwealth's economy and environment from the negative impacts of global warming and climate change, positioning Massachusetts as a national and international leader in climate change solutions.

"Today the Massachusetts Legislature passed the most progressive piece of legislation addressing the global warming and climate change crisis in the country," said Senator Pacheco, chief sponsor of the Global Warming Solutions Act. "Passage of the Global Warming Solutions Act, coupled with approval of other recent environmental legislation, will position Massachusetts as a national and international leader in solutions to one of the most pressing problems of our time."

"There can be no doubt in anyone's mind that Massachusetts is serious about confronting the climate change crisis," said Philip Warburg, President of the Conservation Law Foundation, a leading New England-based environmental group. "These comprehensive emissions caps, combined with the Green Communities Act

passed earlier this year, have made our state a national leader in the battle against global warming and will propel Massachusetts to the forefront of the growing clean energy economy."

"The passage of the Global Warming Solutions Act today caps off a session that will be remembered as a watershed moment in the efforts to stop global warming, protect our environment, and build a clean energy economy in the Commonwealth," said Ben Wright, Global Warming Advocate for Environment Massachusetts.

"Carbon policy such as that proposed in the global warming solutions act will help enable Massachusetts to lead the world in the clean energy economy of the 21st century," Dave Miller, executive managing director of Clean Energy Venture Group.

The enacted Global Warming Solutions Act allows for the strongest cap in the country reducing greenhouse gas emissions from 10 to 25 percent below 1990 levels by 2020 and 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. Under the bill, violators will be subject to

stringent penalties.

The legislation would allow the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs to establish a comprehensive plan to achieve the 2020 emissions reductions. The Secretary will also conduct a climate-change impact study on the adaptation of terrestrial and marine habitats.

Prior to the Legislature's approval of the bill, the Global Warming Solutions Act received significant support from state and national leaders, including a letter of support for strong carbon cap legislation from Nobel Peace Prize winner and former Vice President Al Gore.

"This is an historic moment and we are grateful the Legislature was able to act swiftly on this piece of legislation," said Senator Pacheco, chairman of the Senate Committee on Global Warming and Climate Change. "Our actions today will revolutionize the Commonwealth's future economy by spurring job growth, sparking innovation, and protecting our environment for future generations. I'm extremely pleased that we were able to act now. The cost of inaction was just too great."

Senate Post Audit and Oversight Committee Report Warns of Global Warming and Climate Change Impacts

On July 29, the Senate Committees on Post Audit and Oversight and Global Warming and Climate Change released “The Cost of Inaction,” a new report detailing the economic and environmental consequences the Commonwealth will face if Massachusetts does not take a strong stance on fighting global warming and climate change.

During a press conference held that morning at the State House, Senator Pacheco was joined by members of the business community and legislators to show support for the strong caps in the Global Warming Solutions Act and likely House action on the legislation.

“The Commonwealth cannot afford to ignore the negative effects of global warming

and climate change any longer,” said Senator Pacheco, chairman of the Senate Committee on Global Warming and Climate Change. “Sea temperatures continue to rise, storm intensity is predicted to heighten, and our economy, the public’s health, and our precious ecosystem are in jeopardy. If global warming and climate change continue to remain unchecked in the Commonwealth, the cost of inaction will be in the billions.”

The new report outlines the economic and environmental costs of inaction including increases in storm emergency funding, higher insurance rates, and other economic costs. The report cites

the numerous advantages, such as a competitive advantage in the “green economy” and “early mover” benefits, which would benefit the Commonwealth and help secure its global and national lead on this issue.

“The report is in and the evidence is overwhelming: Massachusetts must take action *now* to avoid the most significant environmental and economic impacts of global warming,” said Sue Reid, Director of the Massachusetts Clean Energy & Climate Change Initiative at Conservation Law Foundation. “The time has come for us to join the growing number of states that have capped global warming emissions.”

Senate Approves Bill For Naturopathic Licensing

In July the Senate approved legislation, sponsored by Senator Pacheco, to provide oversight for naturopathic doctors in the Commonwealth. This bill was supported by the Massachusetts Society of Naturopathic Doctors.

“An Act Providing For the Registration of Naturopathic Doctors,” would provide for the licensure and registration

of naturopathic doctors and provides for the assurance of appropriate training and qualifications for practitioners licensed in the Commonwealth.

The legislation also includes enforcement mechanisms providing penalties for the representation of oneself as a naturopathic doctor without a license.

“This legislation will help provide oversight and transparency for naturo-

pathic doctors by establishing necessary guidelines that a doctor must meet before receiving a state license,” said Senator Pacheco. “I am happy that the Senate was able to pass such legislation to increase the protection of the citizens of the Commonwealth.”

The bill was sent to the House for further action.

Senate Approves Legislation to Ensure Proper Care of Alzheimer's Patients

This month the Massachusetts Senate passed legislation to help Alzheimer's patients in facilities throughout the Commonwealth.

The legislation, "An Act Relative To Dementia Special Care Units In Long Term Care Facilities," sponsored by Senator Pacheco, would direct the Commissioner of the Department of Public Health, the Alzheimer's

Association, and representatives of the nursing home industry to publicize rules and regulations for the staffing and appearance of dementia specialty care units.

"This legislation will help establish a uniform set of guidelines to ensure that patients suffering from Alzheimer's and dementia are provided with the best quality care available," said Senator Pacheco, vice-chair of the Joint Committee on Health-

care Financing.

"Affecting more than 120,000 people here in Massachusetts, Alzheimer's disease impacts the lives of the individual, their families and our society. I am happy that today we were able to take steps ensuring the best quality care for those patients in long term care facilities."

Massachusetts Legislature Approves Health Care Reform Initiatives

Toward the end of the legislative session, the Senate and House reached consensus on comprehensive legislation that will usher in the next phase of health care reform in Massachusetts with a package of new initiatives aimed at bringing down escalating health care costs and creating greater access to primary care.

"This legislation makes patient safety a top priority and increases cost-containment and transparency measures in the health care industry," said Senator Pacheco, vice-chair of the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing.

The legislation pro-

motes the modernization of the health care system to reduce waste and improve quality care, establishing the Commonwealth as a national leader in the statewide adoption of electronic medical records and uniform billing, which together could save hundreds of millions of dollars.

The compromise legislation authorizes the Division of Health Care Finance and Policy and the Attorney General to hold an annual public hearing with health care providers and health care insurers to investigate and report on health care cost drivers and make cost-reduction recommendations. It also creates a Special Commission on Health Payment Reform to investigate restructuring the current payment system to provide incentives for efficient and effective care.

The 15-member commission will make its recommendations no later than April 1, 2009.

The legislation requires the Department of Public Health to set a new "marketing code of conduct" that all pharmaceutical and medical device companies must adopt and comply with, as enforced by the state. The standard will include all the restrictions and guidelines in the most recent versions of industry-adopted ethics codes. The compromise language also requires all pharmaceutical and medical device companies to disclose the value, nature, purpose and recipient of any fee, payment, subsidy or other economic benefit with a value over \$50 that goes to any health care professional in the Commonwealth.

Senator Pacheco Votes for Protection and Enhancement of State Recreational Land

\$1.7 billion authorized for land conservation and state park infrastructure

On July 29, 2008 the Massachusetts Legislature approved legislation to advance the conservation and acquisition of recreational land and make improvements to state park facilities and properties operated by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and other state environmental agencies including the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The bill authorizes \$1.7 billion in bonds to fund efforts for the next five years.

“Maintaining our parks, beaches and recreational areas, is essential for enhancing the quality of life for citizens across the Commonwealth,” said Senator Pacheco, vice-chair of the Joint Committee on the Environment, Natural Resources and Agricul-

ture.

Senate President Therese Murray (D-Plymouth) said the environmental bond bill is a valuable investment in recreational land that is important to residents across the Commonwealth.

The bond bill includes \$1.4 billion for land protection and acquisition, and another \$325 million to enhance public parks and rebuild infrastructure, including the repair and construction of DCR bridges and state-run campgrounds, hiking trails, swimming pools, beaches and skating rinks.

“Our public parks are suffering from a long-standing billion dollar to-do-list and this will help carry out many projects,” said Senator Pam Resor (D-Acton), Senate chair of the Joint Committee on Environment,

Natural Resources and Agriculture. “Authorizing this bond money is only the first step, and we look forward to the administration taking the next step to implement critical improvement projects.”

The bill also provides for the design and construction of urban parks in neighborhoods where there is a lack of recreational space, and it includes authorization for new programs to address climate change, wildlife protection and deteriorating water supply infrastructure.

The bill was then sent to the House of Representatives for further action and is now on the Governor’s desk to be signed.

Legislative Accomplishments: January 2007-July 2008

During its 185th legislative session, the Massachusetts Legislature made great strides and passed nearly 100 pieces of key legislation and debated many more initiatives. More than 435 bills that the Senate has acted upon have become law.

Education, health care, the environment and public safety were among the Legislature’s top priorities.

The Legislature passed numerous environmental initiatives, positioning Massachusetts

as a leader in clean and renewable energy technology and the green economy. These initiatives include the Global Warming Solutions Act, the Biofuels Act, the Green Communities Act and the Oceans Act.

Legislation such as the Commonwealth Corps bill enhanced support for education and community service efforts throughout the Commonwealth. The foundation for the final version of the bill was based on the strong efforts of

Senator Pacheco to enhance service learning opportunities throughout the Commonwealth.

The Legislature also passed a \$2 billion higher education bond bill, a \$1.35 billion affordable housing bond bill, a \$1 billion life sciences bill, the state authorized \$150 million in local transportation aid, and \$15 million in funding to help more than 100,000 elderly residents and low-income families.

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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.

Governor Deval Patrick Visits Our Region

Focus on economic development, Life Science Center

On July 29, Governor Deval Patrick participated in a roundtable discussion in Taunton during a meeting of Senator Pacheco's Business and Economic Advisory Council. The theme of the discussion was the economic development of Southeastern Massachusetts.

"Since its inception in September, the Business and Economic Advisory Council has provided an open forum for leaders throughout our community to continue the dialogue about the region's econ-

omy," said Senator Pacheco. "This time we discussed bringing the Myles Standish Industrial Park to the highest level in emerging technologies and new job creation throughout the region."

Speaking before the Council's more than 100 business and community leaders, Governor Patrick spoke of the ailing economy and the relief in sight. Council members voiced their concerns and discussed the future of the economy in Southeastern Massachusetts.

An anticipated boost to the economy will likely be created by the establishment of the area's future life science/education training center.

In June the Senate approved and the governor signed a \$1 billion Life Sciences bill that would provide \$5 million for a life science/education training center located in Taunton.

The center is expected to revitalize the Myles Standish Industrial Park and create thousands of new jobs throughout the region.