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March 15, 2013

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives:

I am filing for your consideration a bill entitled "An Act Providing for the Preservation and Improvement of Land, Parks, and Clean Energy in the Commonwealth".

Last October, my administration published our sixth capital investment plan, which presented a responsible capital investment strategy for fiscal year 2013 through fiscal year 2017. In order to provide for continued investment in our Commonwealth's infrastructure and innovation economy, I am filing a series of bond bills, in addition to this bill, to support this plan's future funding needs through fiscal year 2017.

The citizens of the Commonwealth have asked for and deserve public infrastructure which will meet their needs, create jobs and stimulate economic growth in every corner of our state. Targeted investment in our infrastructure solidifies the foundation of our Commonwealth for future generations.

It is our responsibility to provide for the safety and welfare of our residents by strengthening our environmental infrastructure. We must work to ensure our dams, flood control infrastructure, air quality and water quality are sustainable for ourselves and future generations. We have a responsibility to preserve our valuable open spaces, farms and natural habitats, to provide well-maintained and accessible parks and recreational facilities, and to reduce greenhouse gases through investment in clean energy and energy efficiency initiatives.

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This bill includes funding for improvements to our environmental infrastructure included in my Administration's five-year capital investment plan, including:

- $312 million for the Accelerated Energy Program, including $250 million for the self-funded Clean Energy Investment Program,
- $120 million for coastal infrastructure,
- $57 million for the Water Pollution Abatement Trust,
- $85 million for seaports including funding for the New Bedford Commerce Terminal and Seaport Council grants,
- $121 million for Department of Conservation and Recreation for parkways, trails, recreation facilities, waterways and flood control,
- $4 million for agricultural programs,
- $30 million for energy efficiency projects including a program to improve non-building energy efficiency, and
- $44.5 million for the Department of Fish and Game to protect our natural habitats and wildlife and to construct and rebuild coastal and inland waterway access sites,
- $14 million to Department of Environmental Protection, and
- $124 million for land and park programs.

These investments will be made within my Administration's debt affordability policy, which has allowed an unprecedented level of capital investment in the Commonwealth while maintaining the highest bond rating in the state's history.

In light of the urgent need to continue funding these improvements, I urge prompt action to enact this bill.

Respectfully submitted,