

SENATE NO. 477

AN ACT RELATIVE TO A SPECIAL COMMISSION TO STUDY INNOVATIVE METHODS FOR FUNDING THE CONSERVATION OF FORESTED WILDLANDS AND WOODLANDS IN THE COMMONWEALTH

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled,
And by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. There shall be a special commission to study innovative methods for funding the
2 conservation of forested wildlands and woodlands owned and managed by public and non-profit
3 organizations, and by private individuals and organizations in the Commonwealth. The
4 commission shall investigate the feasibility of using a range of innovative forest conservation
5 finance methods, including but not limited to: a) local and state ballot measures; b) tax
6 incentives; c) philanthropic initiatives; d) emerging ecosystem service markets; e) enhanced
7 forest-based economies; f) limited development opportunities; and g) the use of settlement
8 funds from legal proceedings. The commission shall furthermore devise a set of specific
9 recommendations for actions that can be taken by the state legislature and the agencies of the
10 state government to facilitate the use of such innovative forest conservation finance methods in
11 the commonwealth. The commission shall hold a series of at least 6 public meetings as part of
12 its review. The commission shall make a progress report to the clerks of the Senate and House
13 no later than December 31, 2007, and shall make a final report on findings and any proposed
14 legislation to the clerks of the Senate and the House no later than December 31, 2008. A copy of
15 such reports shall also be submitted, by said dates, with the Secretary of Administration and

16 Finance, who shall take steps necessary to implement the final recommendations of the
17 commission.

18 SECTION 2. The special commission shall consist of 15 members. 3 members shall be
19 appointed by the Governor, including: the chair of the Executive Office of Environmental
20 Affairs or his designee; the chair of the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) or
21 his designee; and the State Forester or his designee. 12 members shall be jointly appointed by
22 the Senate President and the Speaker of the House, including: 3 members of the Joint
23 Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture; 3 representatives of private
24 sector organizations engaged in forest conservation; 3 members of the non-profit organizations
25 that address land and forest conservation issues; and 3 representatives of academic institutions
26 that study and address forest conservation issues.