

SENATE NO. 489

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE QUABOAG AND WARE RIVER VALLEY HERITAGE DISTRICT COMMISSION

*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 is hereby established the Quaboag and Ware Rivers Valley Heritage
2 District, hereinafter referred to as the district, which shall include the towns of Barre,
3 Belchertown, Brimfield, Brookfield, East Brookfield, Hardwick, Monson, New Braintree, North
4 Brookfield, Palmer, Spencer, Ware, Warren and West Brookfield, to recognize the significant
5 historic, cultural and natural resources of the Quaboag and Ware Rivers Valley and to preserve
6 and interpret those resources for the education and inspiration of present and future generations.
7 Nothing herein shall be construed to limit the rights of private property owners or of municipal
8 or state governments to develop the lands, buildings, and resources in the manner they
9 determine appropriate. It is the purpose of this act to provide a management framework to assist
10 the commonwealth and the units of local government cited herein in the development and
11 implementation of integrated cultural, historical, land and water resource management programs
12 in cooperation with the federal government in order to retain, enhance and interpret the
13 significant values of the lands, water and structure in the district.

14 SECTION 2. There shall be a commission to be known as the Quaboag and Ware Rivers
15 Valley Heritage District Commission, hereinafter referred to as the commission. The
16 commission may: (i) coordinate activities of and establish cooperative agreements with

17 federal, state and local governments and private businesses and organizations in order to
18 further historic preservation, cultural conservation, natural area protection, tourism, and
19 compatible revitalization; (ii) establish guidelines and standards for projects and prepare
20 programs and exhibits, consistent with standards established by the National Park
21 Service for preservation of historic properties, including interpretive methods, to further
22 recognition, preservation, promotion, interpretation and economic revitalization of the
23 historic and natural resources in the district; (iii) provide advise and assistance in
24 preparation of loan or grant applications to the commission and applications for loans or
25 grants from the federal or non-federal sources in furtherance of the purposes of this act;
26 (iv) make loans and grants, from funds appropriated, donated or otherwise made
27 available to the commission, for the purpose of conserving and protecting sites,
28 buildings, resources and objects which are included or eligible for inclusion on the
29 National Register of Historic Places or for the purpose of providing education and
30 cultural programs which encourage appreciation of the resources in the district; (v)
31 prepare and implement a study report which shall incorporate, in whole or in part, the
32 plan prepared by the Quaboag and Ware Rivers Valley Heritage District Commission
33 and which shall present a unified historic preservation and interpretive plan for the
34 district. The report shall include an analysis of the methods and means of identifying,
35 preserving and interpreting the historical, cultural and natural resources of the district
36 along with recommendations concerning utilization of those resources and coordination
37 of activities within the district.

38 SECTION 3. The commission shall consist of the commissioner of conservation and
39 recreation or his designee, the chairman of the Massachusetts historical commission or

40 his designee, the executive director of the Massachusetts office of travel and tourism or
41 his designee, and 6 other persons to be appointed by the governor, 4 of whom shall be
42 representatives of local government from the communities within the district and 2 of
43 whom shall be individuals who are residents of the district to represent other interests as
44 the governor deems appropriate. A vacancy in the commission shall be filled in the
45 manner in which the original appointment was made. The members appointed by the
46 governor shall serve for terms of 3 years but a member may serve after the expiration of
47 his term until his successor has been appointed and qualified.

48 Members of the commission shall receive no compensation for their services on the
49 commission but may receive reasonable expenses for travel when engaged in
50 commission business if the expenses are not reimbursed by any other source.

51 The chairperson of the commission shall be elected by the members of the commission
52 for a term of 1 year and may be eligible for re-election to subsequent terms. A simple
53 majority of the members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The
54 commission shall meet at least quarterly. In addition, the commission may meet at the
55 call of the chairperson or a majority of its members.

56 SECTION 4. The commission may, for the purpose of this act, hold such hearings, sit
57 and act at such times and places, take such testimony and receive such evidence, as the
58 commission may deem necessary. The commission may make such bylaws, rules and
59 regulations as it deems necessary to carry out its functions. When so authorized by the
60 commission, a member or agent of the commission may take any action which the
61 commission is authorized to take by this section.

62 The commission may establish and appoint technical advisory groups and
63 subcommittees to provide technical advice in financing, historic preservation, natural
64 resource preservation, recreation, tourism, and intergovernmental coordination.
65 Notwithstanding any other general or special law to the contrary, the commission may
66 seek, accept and dispose of donations of funds, property and services from individuals,
67 foundations, corporations and other private entities and from public entities for the
68 purpose of carrying out its duties. The commission may use funds to obtain money from
69 any sources under any program or law requiring the recipient of such money to make a
70 contribution in order to receive such money. The commission may obtain, by purchase,
71 rental, donation or otherwise, such property, facilities and services as may be needed to
72 carry out its duties. The commission may acquire real property or interests in real
73 property in the district by gift, rental or purchase with money which was given,
74 bequeathed or appropriated to the commission on the condition that the money would be
75 used to purchase real property or interests therein in the district.

76 The commission may establish such advisory groups as the commission deems
77 necessary to ensure open communication with and assistance from the secretary of the
78 United States Department of the Interior, the commonwealth, political subdivisions
79 thereof and interested persons.

80 The commission may enter into cooperative assessments with the secretary of the United
81 States Department of the Interior, the commonwealth, political subdivisions therefore,
82 the commonwealth or any other person.