OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR

Pursuing Equitable State-Owned Land Reimbursements for Municipalities

Municipal Impact Study - Issued January 24, 2025

Prepared By: Division of Local Mandates

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Butler's Toothpick, Salisbury Beach State Reservation, Salisbury, MA

OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR DIANA DIZOGLIO

January 24, 2025

Dear Reader:

Local aid programs play a crucial role in supporting essential municipal services. Among these is a program that allocates payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) to 297 cities and towns across Massachusetts that collectively host over 461,000 acres of tax-exempt state-owned land. An overwhelming majority (92%) of this land is protected (primarily used for conservation and/or recreation with significant limitations on development) and showcases some of the most scenic landscapes in the Commonwealth, from Salisbury Beach to Mount Greylock.

In the years since this office last examined state-owned land, the Commonwealth has invested additional monies to the PILOT program, from a \$31 million appropriation in FY 2021 to \$53 million in FY 2025. This \$22 million investment was not distributed equally among municipalities hosting state-owned land; instead, the PILOT formula results in cities and towns receiving widely varied reimbursements ranging from \$5 to \$28,546 per acre. Municipalities hosting large swaths of protected state-owned land essential to the state's climate goals have received some of the lowest PILOT reimbursements per acre.

Parks, forests, and wildlife management areas (WMAs) provide value that cannot be measured by the market, such as preserving habitat for wildlife to thrive, promoting carbon sequestration to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and offering recreational opportunities that boost physical and mental wellbeing. This report recommends providing supplemental funding to recognize this non-market value. In addition, this report recommends funding levels and safeguards to provide some certainty in anticipated PILOT reimbursements for municipal budgetary planning.

It is my privilege to submit this municipal impact study that examines the state-owned land program with a new lens. It is my hope that these recommendations will engage legislators, the Administration, stakeholders, and community members, and encourage collaboration and advocacy for investments that consider the full value of state-owned land and reduce per-acre funding disparities.

I invite you to access my office's <u>state-owned land dashboard</u>, which includes information and interactive tools. Dashboard users can explore how the report's findings and recommendations impact individual communities and regions.

Sincerely,

Diana Diloglio

Diana DiZoglio Auditor of the Commonwealth

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DCAMM	Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance
DCR	Department of Conservation and Recreation
DLM	Division of Local Mandates
DOR	Department of Revenue
EEA	Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
EQV	equalized valuation
FY	fiscal year
PILOT	payments in lieu of taxes
WMA	wildlife management area



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ABOUT THE DIVISION OF LOCAL MANDATES

The Office of the State Auditor's Division of Local Mandates (DLM) was established by Proposition 2½, a ballot measure passed by voters in 1980 intended to limit the amount of revenue a municipality can raise through property tax increases, absent voter approval. Additionally, Proposition 2½ protects cities and towns from the involuntary imposition of expenditures by state law, rule, or regulation. This protection is codified in M.G.L. c. 29, § 27C, referred to as the Local Mandate Law, which provides that any state law, rule, or regulation adopted after 1980 that imposes new direct service or cost obligations on cities and towns, excluding incidental local administration expenses, is effective only if locally accepted by the municipality or fully paid for by the Commonwealth. This protection also applies to regional school districts and educational collaboratives.

DLM determines the financial impact on cities and towns of proposed and existing state laws, rules, and regulations. A city, town, regional school district or educational collaborative, or the Legislature (via the House, Senate, or a legislative committee) may petition DLM for a determination of whether the Commonwealth has fully paid for the costs imposed by any law, rule, or regulation subject to the Local Mandate Law and, if not, the amount of the deficiency. DLM shares its determinations with the petitioners, as well as the Executive and Legislative branches of the government.

In 1984, the Legislature expanded DLM's responsibilities to include examining any state law or regulation having a significant financial impact on cities and towns, regardless of whether the Local Mandate Law applies. This statute is codified as M.G.L. c. 11, § 6B. Pursuant to this law, DLM releases reports known as "municipal impact studies" or "6B reports."

DLM's mandate determinations, cost analyses, and municipal impact studies protect cities and towns by examining issues impacting municipal budgets, offering recommendations to make government work better, and ensuring that local governments are not financially burdened by inadequately funded obligations imposed by the state.

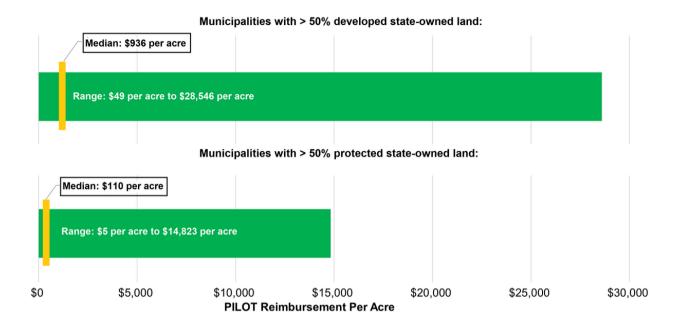
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Local aid programs in Massachusetts play a crucial role in supporting essential municipal services. Among these is a program that allocates payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) to 297 municipalities that host state-owned land. The Commonwealth owns over 705,000 acres of land (*hereinafter* "Commonwealth land holdings"), of which 461,000 acres are state-owned land eligible for the state's PILOT program (*hereinafter* "state-owned land" or "PILOT acreage").¹ The PILOT program reimburses municipalities for unrealized property tax revenue for both *developed* and *protected* land.² At least 92% of the land in the PILOT program is *protected* (such as parks, forests, beaches, and wildlife management areas (WMAs)), while the remaining 8% is developed.³

Over the years, the process for determining the value of state-owned land for the PILOT program has changed. Historically, development potential was factored into the valuation of individual state-owned land parcels. In the late 2010s, municipal modernization reforms sought to simplify the valuation process by applying the percentage change in the market value of a municipality's taxable properties to its state-owned land.⁴ The historical valuation process and fluctuating market values across municipalities contribute to the PILOT program having a wide range of reimbursement rates *per acre* for state-owned land (both developed and protected), from a low of \$5 per acre to a high of \$28,546, with the median reimbursement being \$127 per acre as of FY 2024.⁵

The disparity in per-acre reimbursements remains apparent when comparing municipalities with mostly protected state-owned land holdings to those with mostly developed state-owned land holdings.⁶ For municipalities whose state-owned land holdings are at least 50% protected, PILOT reimbursements per acre range from \$5 to \$14,823, with a median of \$110 per acre. Comparatively, municipalities with state-owned land holdings that are at least 50% developed have PILOT reimbursements per acre ranging from \$49 to \$28,546, with a much higher median of \$936 per acre (see Figure 1).⁷

Figure 1 — Comparison of PILOT Reimbursements for Municipalities with Primarily Developed and Primarily Protected State-Owned Land, FY 2024⁸



Narrowing the lens further to the 129 municipalities with state-owned land holdings exceeding 1,000 acres, reimbursement rates per acre range from \$5 to \$926, with a median reimbursement of \$62 per acre.⁹ Protected land makes up most of the PILOT acreage in these municipalities. Lower reimbursements per acre are particularly pronounced in central and western Massachusetts — 90 of the 129 municipalities are located in these regions, and 80 of those have PILOT reimbursements below the state median (\$127 per acre) with rates per acre ranging from \$5 to \$120.¹⁰ These municipalities, in their remarks to DLM, point to low per-acre reimbursements, large state-owned land holdings, and continued acquisitions of land by the Commonwealth as reasons for their struggles to generate tax revenues and fund local services.

While appropriations to the PILOT program are at an all-time high, there continues to be a wide range of reimbursement rates per acre across municipalities for stateowned land — even for protected land holdings of similar size. Since DLM last examined this program in 2020, the Commonwealth has increased funding by 72% from \$30 million in FY 2020 to \$51.5 million in FY 2024.¹¹ Merely increasing funding, however, does not address the significant differential in reimbursement rates per acre. The recommendations made in this report are intended to support an equitable allocation of funding.

Below is a summary of DLM's findings, with links to each page listed.

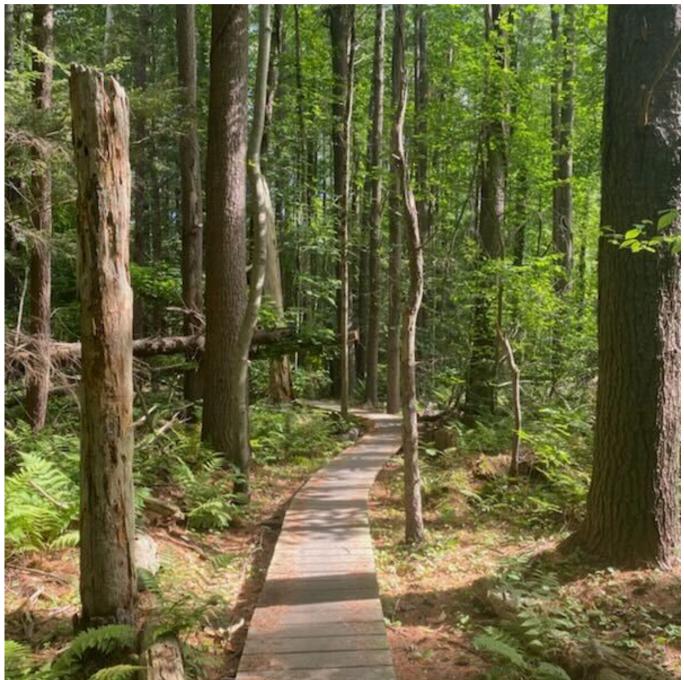
<mark>Finding 1</mark> <u>Page 18</u>	The valuation formula for state-owned land does not account for the environmental and public health benefits produced by protected land.
<mark>Finding 2</mark> Page 20	Increasing appropriations have resulted in larger PILOT reimbursements to municipalities but have masked inequities in per-acre reimbursements.
<u>Finding 3</u> Page 23	75% of municipalities hosting at least 1,000 acres of state-owned land receive PILOT reimbursements below the state median of \$127 per acre.
<mark>Finding_4</mark> Page 29	If appropriations do not grow at the same rate as state-owned land values, PILOT reimbursements will be difficult to predict, creating uncertainty in municipal budgetary planning.

DLM also provides recommendations in this report, which relate to the findings above:

Recommendation 1 Page 33	Target annual supplemental funding to municipalities with PILOT reimbursements per acre below the state median to account for the conservation and recreation value of their protected land.
Recommendation 2 Page 44	Increase PILOT funding by at least the average percentage change in state-owned land values to protect municipalities experiencing lower land value growth from losing funding to municipalities with higher land value growth.
Recommendation 3 Page 46	Establish a hold-harmless safeguard to provide funding stability so municipalities can plan for future expenditures knowing their funding will not decrease year by year.

DLM developed an interactive dashboard that includes information about state-owned land values and PILOT reimbursements at the local level, as well as visualizations that reflect the report's findings and recommendations.

Please click here to access the dashboard and use it as a companion while reviewing the report.



Georgetown/Rowley State Forest, Georgetown, MA

INTRODUCTION

Local aid programs exist in Massachusetts to help cities and towns fund public services in their municipalities. One example is the state-owned land PILOT program, which annually distributes over \$51 million in reimbursements to cities and towns hosting certain land owned by the Commonwealth.¹²

While one may expect a PILOT program to provide payments that offset losses in property tax revenue, this program:

- 1. values state-owned land based on changes in the market value of a municipality's taxable properties, and
- 2. allocates reimbursements based on a municipality's share of state-owned land value against program funding.

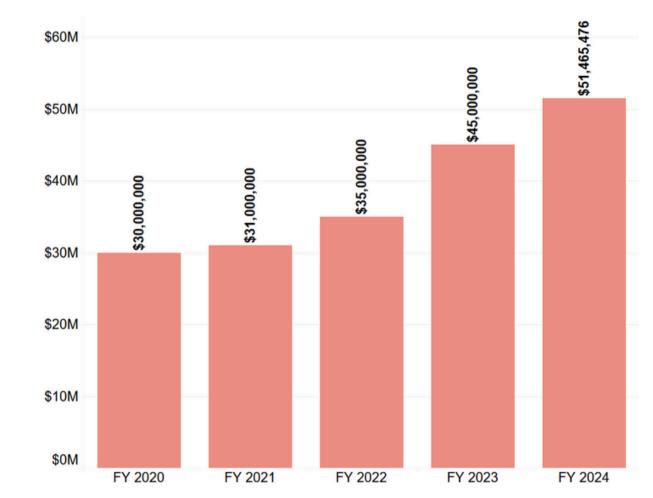
For example, a municipality that holds 1% of all state-owned land value will receive 1% of the program's funding pool.

In 2020, the Division of Local Mandates (DLM) reviewed state-owned land PILOT reimbursements and found that state appropriations had not funded the PILOT program to statutory levels for over twenty years.¹³ The 2020 report examined the statewide municipal modernization reforms of 2016, which introduced the valuation and reimbursement processes that exist today for municipalities with state-owned land.¹⁴ Municipalities are now reimbursed based upon the value of the state-owned land they host, which leads to disproportionately larger payments to cities and towns with high or rapidly increasing land values.¹⁵ Municipal officials who were dissatisfied with the resulting disparities questioned whether the program would adequately compensate for future state acquisitions of land. In the 2020 report, DLM recommended that the Legislature fund the program at higher levels and add safeguards to protect municipalities from level or reduced appropriations over time. In fact, funding for the state-owned land PILOT program increased by \$21.5 million between FY 2020 (\$30 million) and FY 2024 (\$51.5 million).¹⁶

As of FY 2024, there are 297 cities and towns receiving PILOT reimbursements for their state-owned land, and municipalities in the program have collectively recouped over \$400 million in program payments since 2010.¹⁷

Figure 2 shows budgetary appropriations for the PILOT program between FY2020 and FY2024.

Figure 2 — State-Owned Land PILOT Appropriations, FY 2020–FY 2024¹⁸



While some state-owned land reimbursements are allocated to developed land (such as courthouses and public health facilities), the majority of PILOT reimbursements are allocated to protected land. Many municipalities in the program host land dedicated to conservation and recreation—protected land that not only promotes biodiversity and mitigates climate change through carbon sequestration, but also provides outdoor activities and public health benefits for all.¹⁹ For the purposes of this report, protected land is defined as state-owned land that is used for conservation and/or recreation and has significant limitations on development.²⁰

Municipalities hosting large swaths of protected state-owned land may experience adverse financial impacts, particularly in areas with low reimbursement rates per acre. Municipalities report a lack of funding for essential public services and infrastructure improvements critical for attracting private investment and spurring economic development.²¹

The negative effect of low PILOT reimbursements per acre may compound over time and has become more pronounced in municipalities with large PILOT acreage and small tax bases.²² This impact is especially acute in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden counties (presented in this report as western Massachusetts) as well as Worcester County (presented in this report as central Massachusetts) — regions that collectively host over 71% of the state-owned land eligible for PILOT reimbursements.²³

While increasing PILOT funding levels would benefit participating cities and towns, higher state appropriations alone fail to address inequities in the distribution of the program's funding. As the Commonwealth prioritizes conserving additional land to meet its net-zero emissions goals, there is an opportunity to expand the PILOT program to provide supplemental funding to municipalities that host protected land. This can more appropriately recognize the environmental and public health benefits of protected state-owned land enjoyed by all residents of Massachusetts.²⁴

In this report, DLM reviews current issues in the PILOT program, compares reimbursements to land holdings, and proposes ways to equitably recognize the impact on cities and towns of hosting significant amounts of state-owned land. DLM does this using public data on state-owned land valuation, PILOT acreage, and reimbursements. The Office of the State Auditor has engaged stakeholders throughout this process and invites additional engagement in the coming months and years.



Blue Hills Reservation, Milton, MA

BACKGROUND

Overview of State-Owned Land

The state-owned land PILOT program, authorized under M.G.L. c. 58, §§ 13-17, is a local aid program that allocates payments to municipalities for unrealized property tax revenue from certain Commonwealth land holdings.

For land to qualify for PILOT reimbursements, it must fall within one of the following categories:

- State forests;
- State parks and reservations;
- Wildlife sanctuaries;
- Fish hatcheries;
- Game preserves;
- State military campgrounds;
- Veterans' homes;
- Land housing state houses of correction and juvenile facilities;
- Land owned by the University of Massachusetts and other state higher education institutions;
- Land held by state agencies such as the Departments of Correction, Mental Health, Developmental Services, and Public Health; or
- Other miscellaneous land.²⁵

46%

of State-Owned Land Eligible for PILOT in Fiscal Year 2024 are State Forests

The program does not provide reimbursement based on the value of improvements made to land, for land held by state agencies not identified in the state-owned land statutes, or for land that was previously held by tax-exempt entities such as land trusts and local governments.²⁶ Examples of Commonwealth land holdings that are not in the PILOT program include the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail (which is partly under the control of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, an agency not listed in the PILOT statute) and the Wompatuck State Park (a tax-exempt property that was previously under federal control).²⁷

As of FY 2024, there were 461,560 acres of state-owned land in the PILOT program. An overwhelming majority of PILOT program land (92%) consists of protected land dedicated to conservation and recreation, such as forests, parks, reservations, and wildlife management areas (WMA), as seen in Figure 3.²⁸

Figure 3 — PILOT Program Land Categories, FY 2024²⁹

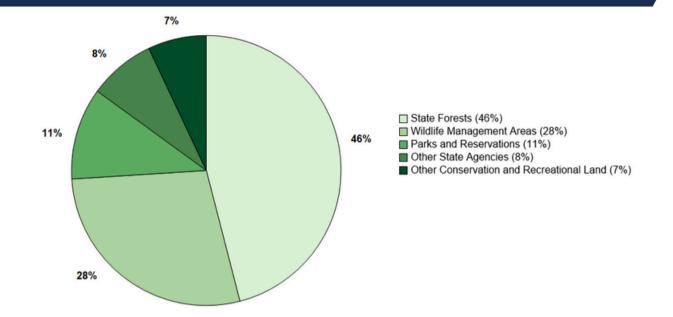
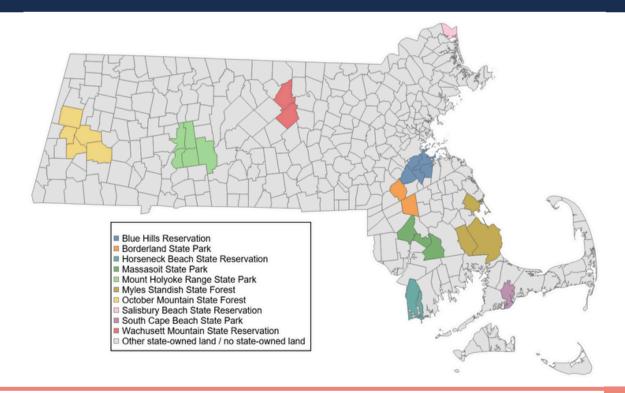


Figure 4, below, illustrates the largest state parks, forests, beaches, and reservations across the Commonwealth that generate PILOT reimbursements for the municipalities in which they are located.

Figure 4 — Notable PILOT Program Land Holdings³⁰



Municipalities vary widely in how much state-owned land they host: some have less than 1 acre of land eligible for PILOT reimbursements (e.g., Woburn and Haverhill), while others have over 10,000 acres of land (e.g., Bourne and Plymouth).³¹ More than two-thirds of all state-owned land in the program (71%) is located in western and central Massachusetts, which is home to some of the state's largest forests and other protected lands.³²

Figure 5 highlights municipalities' PILOT acreage in Massachusetts. Figure 6 takes this a step further, focusing on ten municipalities with the largest state-owned land holdings, which collectively represent over one-fifth (21.6%) of all acreage in the program but only 9% of PILOT reimbursements (\$4.6 million).³³

For most municipalities in this group, state-owned land comprises at least a third of their land area. This has significant, disproportionate impacts on these cities and towns regarding economic development potential and the cost of public services provided to non-residents who utilize these lands. (See <u>Finding 3</u>.)

Figure 5 — State-Owned Land Acreage (PILOT Acreage), FY 2024³⁴

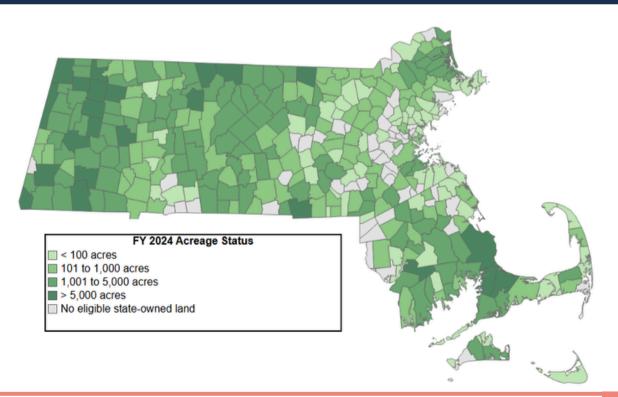


Figure 6 — Municipalities with Largest State-Owned Land Acreage (PILOT Acreage), FY2024³⁵

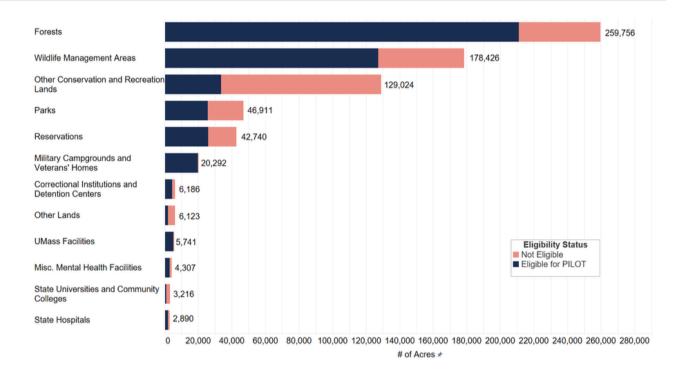
Municipality	County	PILOT Acreage	PILOT Acreage as a % of All Municipal Land
Savoy	Berkshire	12,198	53.0%
Plymouth	Plymouth	11,886	18.1%
Warwick	Franklin	11,879	49.3%
Washington	Berkshire	11,720	47.2%
Bourne	Barnstable	10,812	41.2%
Sandwich	Barnstable	9,099	32.5%
Mount Washington	Berkshire	8,409	58.7%
Wendell	Franklin	8,087	39.2%
Hawley	Franklin	8,079	41.0%
Great Barrington	Berkshire	7,437	25.4%
State Median		691	5.2%



Kenneth Dubuque Memorial State Forest, Hawley, MA

As of FY 2024, the Commonwealth owns over 705,000 acres of land within the state.³⁶ Figure 7 illustrates that most of the Commonwealth's land holdings are protected, regardless of eligibility for PILOT reimbursement.

Figure 7 — Commonwealth Land Holdings Eligible for PILOT by Acreage, FY 2024³⁷



Determining State-Owned Land Values and Reimbursements

The process to value state-owned land and calculate PILOT reimbursements was last revised in FY2019 as a result of changes from the Municipal Modernization Act of 2016.³⁸ The Department of Revenue (DOR) updates the value of state-owned land every two years by applying the change in a municipality's equalized valuation (EQV).³⁹ Under this valuation process, state-owned land values grow at the same rate as taxable property values in each municipality, as illustrated in Figure 8, which uses Southampton as an example.⁴⁰

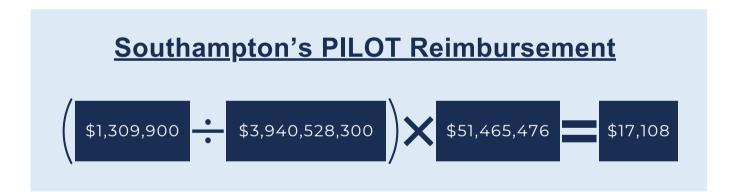
Figure 8 — Equalized Property Values and State-Owned Land Values in Southampton⁴¹

FY 2020 EQV	FY 2022 EQV	Change in EQV between FY2020 and FY2022	
\$841,345,200	\$940,959,000	11.84%	
FY 2023 State-Owned Land Value	FY 2024 EQV Adjustment	FY 2024 State-Owned Land Value	
\$1,171,200	1.1184	\$1,309,900	

While a municipality's state-owned land value is based on changes in the market value of its taxable properties, a municipality's PILOT reimbursement is based on its share of all state-owned land value. For example, if a municipality has 3% of all state-owned land value in Massachusetts, it will receive 3% of the money appropriated for PILOT reimbursements that year. Each municipality's PILOT reimbursement is calculated by the following formula:⁴²



In FY 2024, municipalities received reimbursements based on two figures—an appropriation of \$51.5 million and a total statewide state-owned land value of \$3.94 billion.⁴³ Using Southampton as an example, its PILOT reimbursement was calculated as follows:



Recent Program Trends

Since the late 2010s, property values and home prices in Massachusetts have increased significantly as a result of inflationary pressures, limited housing stock, and a competitive housing market.⁴⁴ State-owned land values have also increased during this time, reflecting the growth in the estimated market value of taxable properties. Figure 9 shows that state-owned land increased in value by \$794 million, or by 25%, between FY 2020 and FY 2024.⁴⁵

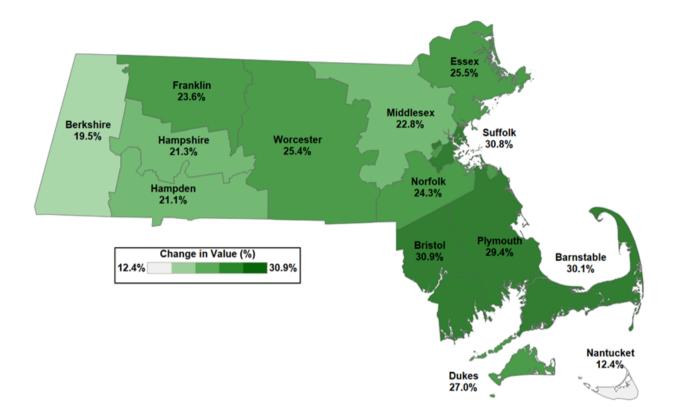
Figure 9 — State-Owned Land Values, FY 2020–FY 2024⁴⁶

Fiscal Year	Total State-Owned Land Value	Percentage Change from Previous Year		
FY 2020*	\$3,146,119,500	9.33%		
FY 2021	\$3,168,553,800	0.71%		
FY 2022*	\$3,516,952,900	11.00%		
FY 2023	\$3,526,847,500	0.28%		
FY 2024*	\$3,940,528,300	11.73%		

* Revaluation years; the Department of Revenue revalues state-owned land every two years.

Although this report has been evaluating the impact of the PILOT program by municipality, the differential in state-owned land value growth also exists at the county level across the Commonwealth. Figure 10 illustrates growth by county: Barnstable, Bristol, and Suffolk counties had the highest growth in values between FY 2020 and FY 2024, while land values for Berkshire and Nantucket counties did not grow as quickly.⁴⁷

Figure 10 — Change in State-Owned Land Value by County, FY 2020–FY 2024⁴⁸



Advancing Environmental Goals with State-Owned Land

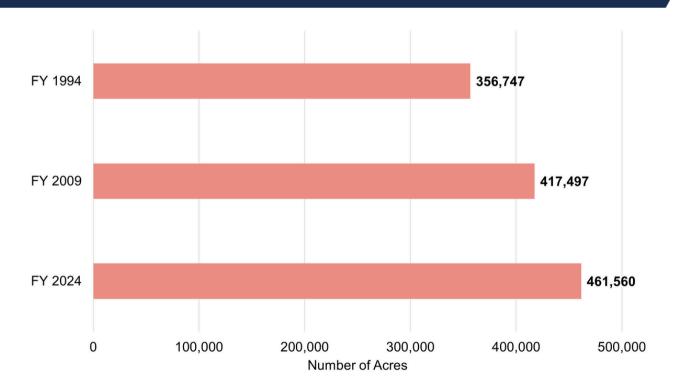
According to the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), the Commonwealth's protected land holdings play a key role in climate change mitigation in the state, serving as a source of carbon storage to help offset greenhouse gas emissions.⁴⁹ In 2021, the Legislature and administration enacted climate "roadmap" legislation that established a gradual reduction in greenhouse gas emissions limits for the state, with the goal of net-zero emissions by 2050.⁵⁰ Since then, the EEA has commissioned reports to outline strategies for meeting the 2050 goals, and released a "policy action plan" to meet certain standards by 2025 and 2030.⁵¹

According to the EEA's Clean Energy and Climate plans, protecting "natural and working lands,"⁵² such as forests and wetlands, is one way to help meet these emissions goals.⁵³ These lands are not only home to wildlife and provide recreational opportunities, they also help remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in a "carbon pool," a process known as carbon sequestration.⁵⁴ At least 82.5% of carbon sequestration in Massachusetts occurs in forest land.⁵⁵

The state's 2025 and 2030 Climate Plans outlined short-term goals, such as conserving additional protected land and increasing the amount of carbon sequestered in the Commonwealth's protected land holdings, to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by 25% below 1990 levels before 2030.⁵⁶ Massachusetts owns at least 44% of all protected land statewide, which holds an estimated 21.5 million tons of carbon as of 2023.⁵⁷

The Commonwealth has increased its acquisitions of land eligible for PILOT reimbursements since the establishment of initial greenhouse gas emissions limits in 1990. Figure 11 shows that Massachusetts acquired over 100,000 acres of land eligible for PILOT reimbursements in the last thirty fiscal years (a 29% increase).⁵⁸ As part of its environmental initiatives, the Commonwealth aims to conserve an additional 167,000 acres of undeveloped land by 2030 through ownership or conservation restrictions.⁵⁹ Conserving additional land will contribute to meeting the state's net emissions reduction goals and increase the total state-owned land eligible for PILOT. As discussed in this report, increasing PILOT acreage does not necessarily guarantee higher reimbursements for municipalities.⁶⁰

Figure 11 — State-Owned Land Eligible for PILOT Reimbursements, FY 1994–FY 2024⁶¹



FINDINGS

Finding #1: The valuation formula for state-owned land does not account for the environmental and public health benefits produced by protected land.

State-owned land values in Massachusetts have historically been determined by market-based assessment practices. Until the late 2010s, DOR revalued land in each municipality every three to four years, using assessors' property records. At that time, each parcel of land (such as a park or forest) had its own individual value. Land that was accessible and easy to develop received the designation of a "prime" lot, resulting in a higher base valuation.⁶² State-owned land with no public access and on which one could not build received an "undevelopable" designation that valued the land at lower levels. Municipalities with large quantities of "prime" state-owned parcels therefore experienced more growth from higher base valuations (and consequently, PILOT reimbursements), while municipalities with higher vast protected. "undevelopable" land in the PILOT program experienced slower land value growth (and lower PILOT reimbursements).63

Reforms to standardize state-owned land valuation under the Municipal Modernization Act of 2016 made it easier and quicker to determine the land value in each municipality. Beginning in FY 2019, the new process valued all state-owned land in a municipality at the same rate rather than valuing individual parcels (see <u>Figure 8</u> for more information).⁶⁴ Nevertheless, the valuation process continues to tie state-owned land values to market value changes, allowing disparities in per-acre PILOT reimbursements to persist among municipalities. Cities and towns experiencing lower property value increases due to limited market demand will see this mirrored in their state-owned land values, and ultimately, their per-acre PILOT reimbursement rates, regardless of the value produced by this state-owned land.

The current practice used to value state-owned land for PILOT reimbursement fails to recognize that most land in the program is not intended for development, and does not value recreational and environmental benefits as a public good.⁶⁵ The value of land for carbon sequestration should be relatively stable across the Commonwealth, as removing one ton of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere has the same climate impact —and therefore the same value— regardless of the land's location in the Commonwealth. Great Barrington and Dracut both hold forested land providing the benefit of carbon sequestration, yet Great Barrington received \$54 per acre in PILOT reimbursements for its 7,000 acres of state forests, while Dracut received \$418 per acre for its 189 acres of forested land.⁶⁶

Academic scholars have identified indicators of non-market value for protected land. Direct uses of land such as hiking, swimming, fishing, and other recreational opportunities on state properties have non-market economic value, promoting the physical and mental health benefits of being outdoors.⁶⁷ Scholars have found that visiting protected land boosts physical and mental wellbeing for all.⁶⁸ Studies have shown that engagement with nature through recreational activities is linked to positive health outcomes including reduced levels of stress, anxiety, and depression, improved sleep and mood, and better cognitive function.⁶⁹ Non-market value also encompasses indirect uses of land, such as carbon sequestration, habitat support, and the preservation of clean air and water, that benefit the Commonwealth and its residents.⁷⁰

Although non-market value is difficult to quantify, existing academic research aids stakeholders in valuing the environmental and public health benefits provided by protected land. At the national level, federal agencies have measured economic value in cost-benefit analyses by looking at individuals' "willingness to pay" for more open spaces.⁷¹ For example, one study estimated that the annual non-market value for recreational use and non-use of the entire National Parks system, which contains over 95 million acres of forest, seashores, rivers, and historic sites, is \$62 billion (\$653 per acre).⁷² At the state level, the EEA, the Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts, and the Rural Policy Advisory Commission are currently exploring ways to recognize the environmental contributions of protected land beyond assessed values.⁷³

Finding #2: Increasing appropriations have resulted in larger PILOT reimbursements to municipalities but have masked inequities in per-acre reimbursements.

As the late 2010s brought changes to the valuation of state-owned land, the Commonwealth started to infuse more funding to the PILOT program. This resulted in higher reimbursements to all cities and towns (please refer to <u>Figure 2</u>). Increased funding of the PILOT program alone, however, cannot resolve the inequities in the program's reimbursement formula.

Although the PILOT formula appears to uniformly reimburse cities and towns based on the value of the state-owned land they host (a municipality's share of the program's appropriation is equal to its share of total state-owned land value), the PILOT formula reimburses municipalities' state-owned land at varying rates *per acre*. Fluctuating market values explain much of this variation. PILOT reimbursements across municipalities ranged between \$5 per acre and \$28,546 per acre, with the median PILOT reimbursement being \$127 per acre.⁷⁴ There are also disparities in median per-acre PILOT reimbursements when comparing municipalities with at least 50% *protected land* (\$110 per acre) and municipalities with at least 50% *developed land* (\$936 per acre).⁷⁵

Stark differences in PILOT reimbursements per acre continue to hold at the county level, as seen in Figures 12 and 13. Average program payments per acre range from as low as \$32 per acre in Franklin County (which has thousands of acres of protected state-owned land) to as high as \$5,504 per acre in Suffolk County (which has less than 200 acres of state-owned land, most of which is developed land).⁷⁶

Figure 12 — PILOT Reimbursements per Acre by County, FY 202477

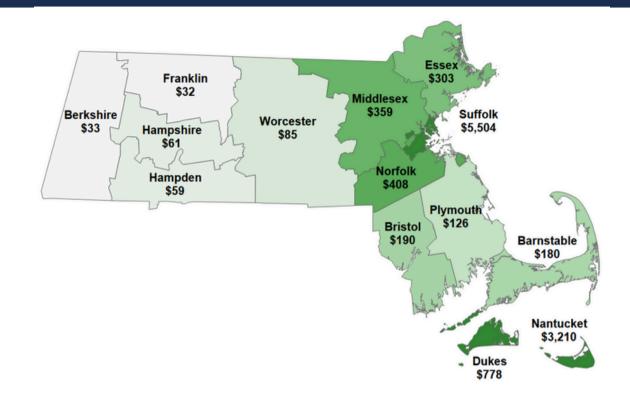
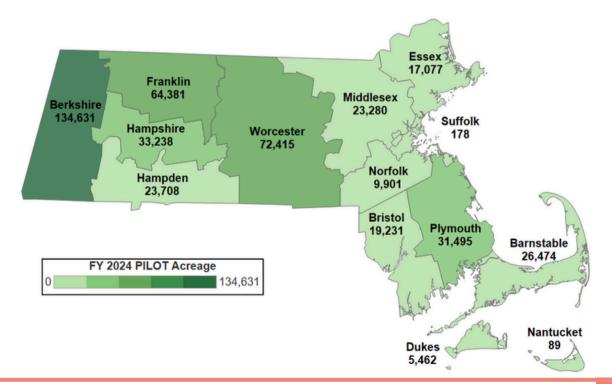


Figure 13 — PILOT Acreage by County, FY 2024⁷⁸



Municipalities with similar PILOT acreage and land holdings can receive vastly different reimbursements. As presented in Figure 14, the towns of Plymouth and Savov both have over 10,000 acres of protected state forests (Myles Standish and Savov Mountain, respectively) that are eligible for PILOT reimbursements.⁷⁹ In FY 2020, Plymouth's PILOT reimbursement rate was \$59 per acre, and Savoy's was \$7 per acre.⁸⁰ While the difference may have been driven in part by Plymouth's developed land, it would not have been a significant factor as developed land consisted of only 3% of Plymouth's total PILOT acreage.⁸¹ Between FY 2020 and FY 2024. the PILOT program appropriation increased by 71.6%, with reimbursements increasing by 73.4% for Plymouth and 66.6% for Savov.⁸² However, in FY 2024. Plymouth's PILOT reimbursement rate was \$102 per acre - 9.2 times higher than Savoy's \$11 per acre.⁸³ Despite the increase in the program's appropriation and similar property value growth (state-owned land values increased by 26.6% in Plymouth and 21.6% in Savoy), stark differences in reimbursement rates persist.⁸⁴

Figure 14 — Plymouth and Savoy Case Study ⁸⁵								
	PILOT Acreage	FY 2024 State-Owned Land Value	FY 2024 PILOT Payment	PILOT Per Acre	PILOT Acreage as a % of Total Municipal Land	Protected Land as % of PILOT Acreage		
Plymout	h 11,885	\$92,690,400	\$1,210,586	\$102	18.1%	97%		
Savoy	12,198	\$10,109,900	\$132,040	\$11	53.0%	100%		

Finding #3: 75% of municipalities hosting at least 1,000 acres of state-owned land receive PILOT reimbursements below the state median of \$127 per acre.

Variations in reimbursements per acre are present when looking at municipalities with shared state-owned land characteristics. For instance, 129 municipalities have large state-owned land holdings that exceed 1,000 acres, with reimbursement rates per acre ranging from \$5 to \$926, and a median reimbursement of \$62 per acre.⁸⁶ Protected land makes up 92% of the PILOT acreage in these municipalities. Of this group of 129 municipalities, 97 have PILOT reimbursements below the state median of \$127 per acre.⁸⁷

Disparities in PILOT reimbursements per acre are increasingly evident when looking at municipalities located in central and western Massachusetts. In fact, 80 out of the 97 municipalities with large state-owned land holdings and PILOT reimbursements below the state median are located in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire, and Worcester counties. This group of municipalities has PILOT reimbursements per acre ranging from \$5 to \$120, with a median reimbursement of only \$42 per acre.⁸⁸

The low median reimbursement rate of \$42 per acre is particularly challenging in light of the prevalence of protected state-owned land in these municipalities. Municipal leaders from western and central Massachusetts voiced concerns to DLM about their municipalities' ability to generate tax revenues and finance services due in part to their large state-owned land holdings, which limit development potential.⁸⁹ They also expressed a reluctance to increase property tax burdens to raise revenues from small, aging populations who have lower per capita incomes.⁹⁰

Figure 15 illustrates the characteristics of 14 municipalities with the largest concentrations of state-owned land. The municipalities in this group host more than 2,500 acres of state-owned land each, with this land covering at least a third (or over 33%) of their total land area. All but two municipalities (Bourne and Townsend) are located in Berkshire and Franklin counties in western Massachusetts, and all have PILOT reimbursements per acre below the state median.⁹¹

Figure 15 — Characteristics of Municipalities with Largest Concentrations of PILOT Land in Municipal Area, FY 2024⁹²

Municipality	County	State- Owned Land Acres	State-Owned Land as a % of All Municipal Land	Protected Land as a % of State-Owned Land	PILOT Per Acre
STATE MEDIAN		691	5.2 %	100%	\$127
Mount Washington	Berkshire	8,409	58.7%	100%	\$42
Savoy	Berkshire	12,198	53.0%	100%	\$11
Warwick	Franklin	11,879	49.3%	99%	\$13
Washington	Berkshire	11,721	47.2%	100%	\$10
Clarksburg	Berkshire	3,540	43.2%	100%	\$9
Bourne	Barnstable	10,812	41.2%	O%	\$90
Hawley	Franklin	8,079	41.0%	100%	\$10
Wendell	Franklin	8,087	39.2%	100%	\$23
Monroe	Franklin	2,620	37.9%	100%	\$5
New Ashford	Berkshire	3,214	37.3%	100%	\$14
Peru	Berkshire	6,131	36.8%	100%	\$14
Adams	Berkshire	5,108	34.8%	100%	\$21
Townsend	Middlesex	7,247	34.3%	100%	\$50
Florida	Berkshire	5,391	34.2%	100%	\$14

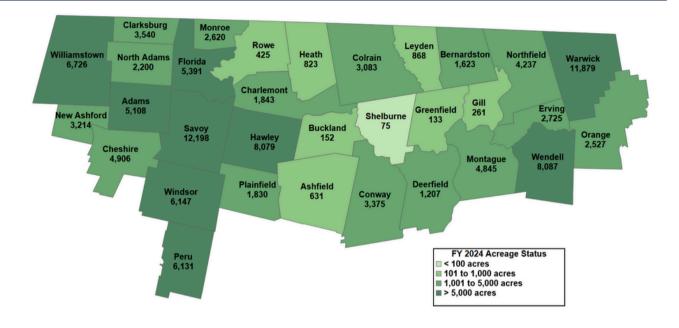
Conversely, Figure 16 shows that municipalities with the smallest concentrations of state-owned land (0.03% or less of municipal land area) are all located in the eastern half of the Commonwealth and have PILOT reimbursements per acre at or significantly higher than the state median.⁹³

Figure 16 — Characteristics of Municipalities with Smallest Concentrations of PILOT Land in Municipal Area, FY 2024⁹⁴

Municipality	County	State-Owned Land Acres	State-Owned Land as a % of All Municipal Land	Protected Land as a % of State-Owned Land	PILOT Per Acre
STATE MEDIAN		691	5.2%	100%	\$127
Haverhill	Essex	0.20	< 0.01%	0%	\$8,545
Lynn	Essex	0.13	< 0.01%	0%	\$28,546
Norwell	Plymouth	0.30	< 0.01%	100%	\$12,147
Woburn	Middlesex	0.35	< 0.01%	0%	\$10,646
Swampscott	Essex	0.11	0.01%	0%	\$25,964
Truro	Barnstable	1	0.01%	100%	\$389
Acton	Middlesex	139	0.01%	0%	\$785
Holliston	Middlesex	1	0.01%	100%	\$3,125
Brockton	Plymouth	2	0.01%	100%	\$251
Wenham	Essex	0.79	0.02%	0%	\$6,515
Westford	Middlesex	3	0.02%	100%	\$127
Orleans	Barnstable	2	0.02%	100%	\$16,347
Hanover	Plymouth	3	0.03%	100%	\$5,037
Dennis	Barnstable	4	0.03%	100%	\$3,426

Low PILOT reimbursement rates per acre are most pronounced in northwest Massachusetts—an area considered as "the most rural and heavily forested corner of the Commonwealth."⁹⁵ The Mohawk Trail byway is included in this region.⁹⁶ The 32 cities and towns in this region (as seen in Figure 17) host over 116,000 acres of protected state-owned land —25% of all land in the PILOT program— yet collectively received only 5.7% of the program's appropriation (\$3 million).⁹⁷ This state-owned land covers 21% of the region's total land area.⁹⁸

Figure 17 — PILOT Land Acreage among Municipalities in Northwest Massachusetts, FY 2024⁹⁹



Adams, like other municipalities in northwest Massachusetts, reports economic development challenges as a result of hosting state-owned land. The town hosts thousands of acres of protected land, accounting for a third of its total land area — including Mt. Greylock State Reservation, home to the highest peak in Massachusetts.¹⁰⁰ Much of the town's state-owned land cannot be developed because of its protected status. See Figure 18 for a comparison of relevant state-owned land data points of Adams against the state median.

Figure 18 — Adams Case Study, FY 2024¹⁰¹

	Adams	State Median
State-owned land value	\$8,352,800	\$6,465,200
PILOT Reimbursement	\$109,091	\$84,439
State-owned land acres eligible for reimbursement	5,108	690.5
PILOT Per Acre	\$21	\$127
State-owned land as a % of total municipal land	34.8%	5.2%

Adams is responsible for providing emergency services on Mt. Greylock, and town officials report a lack of resources to respond to public safety emergencies on protected state-owned land.¹⁰² Like other municipalities in this region, the town of Adams advocates for increased PILOT reimbursements, which could fund public safety and maintenance services related to state-owned land.

Not only do the northwest Massachusetts municipalities have low PILOT reimbursement rates per acre, they are home to 29% of all newly acquired stateowned land between FY2019 and FY2024.¹⁰³ Stakeholders from these and other municipalities holding large swaths of protected PILOT acreage are particularly concerned about continued acquisition of land by the Commonwealth.¹⁰⁴ Nearly 16,000 acres of state-owned land were added to the PILOT program between FY2019 and FY2024.¹⁰⁵ Figures 19 and 20 show that a majority of acquisitions were in western Massachusetts municipalities, with the most acres added in the towns of Chesterfield and Worthington (1,036 acres and 757 acres, respectively).¹⁰⁶ The acquisitions in these two towns amounted to a 20% increase in their total state-owned land; as a result, state-owned land now represents over a fifth of their total land area, well above the state median of 5.2%.¹⁰⁷

Figure 19 — Regions with Highest Share of State-Owned Land Acquisitions between FY 2019 and FY 2024¹⁰⁸

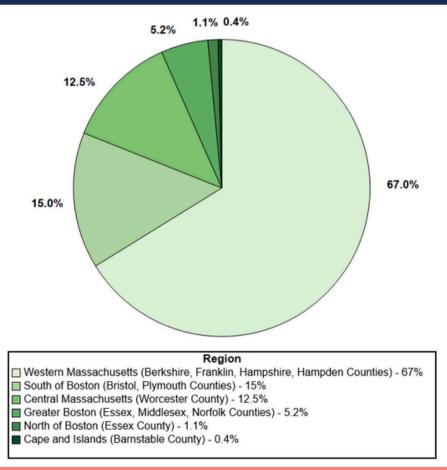
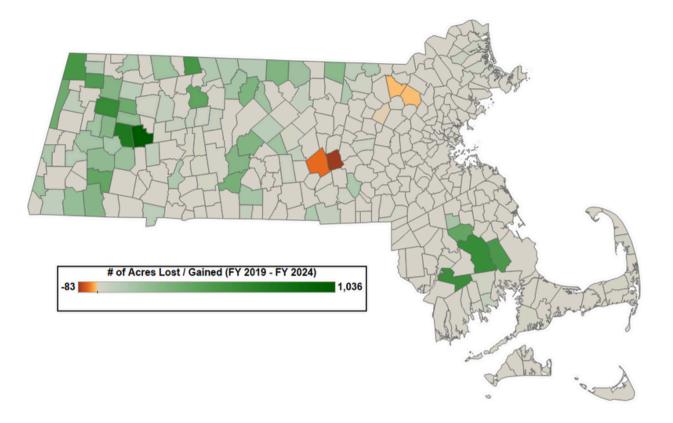


Figure 20 — State-Owned Land Acquisitions and Disposals between FY 2019 and FY 2024¹⁰⁹



An example of a municipality in western Massachusetts that saw recent land acquisitions by the Commonwealth is the town of Washington.¹¹⁰ The town hosts 11,860 acres of state-owned land, all of which is protected, and the PILOT acreage represents 47% of the town's total land area.¹¹¹ Washington receives 95% of its property tax revenue from residential property taxes and has a higher tax rate to help pay for public services (\$15.31 compared to the state median of \$12.79); little revenue comes from commercial and industrial developments.¹¹²

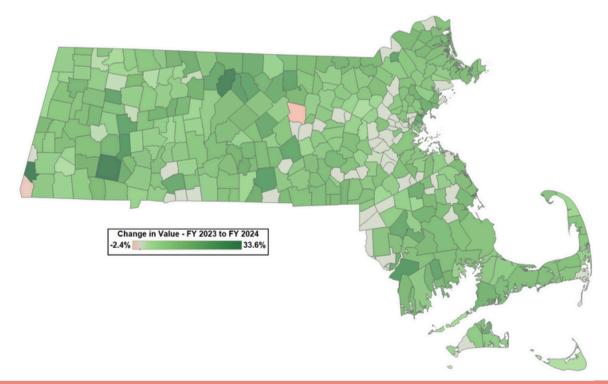
Finding #4: If appropriations do not grow at the same rate as state-owned land values, PILOT reimbursements will be difficult to predict, creating uncertainty in municipal budgetary planning.

For an individual municipality, increases in PILOT reimbursements are contingent upon two factors:

- 1. how fast their real estate market values grow in a given period, and
- 2. the rate of growth in state funding levels.

The average increase in state-owned land values across all municipalities was 12.1% between FY 2023 and FY 2024.¹¹³ Twelve municipalities saw values increase over 20% without acquiring additional land.¹¹⁴ Figure 21 highlights which municipalities experienced the highest and lowest increases in state-owned land values during this one-year period.

Figure 21 — Change in PILOT Land Value, FY 2023–FY 2024¹¹⁵



Under the current formula, municipalities with level or increasing state-owned land value and acreage will see dollar increases in reimbursements *if the state appropriation increases at a rate equivalent to or greater than the average percentage change in state-owned land values.*¹¹⁶ For example, appropriations to the program grew by 14% between FY 2023 and FY 2024, which is above the average increase in state-owned land values of 12.1%.¹¹⁷ This increase in appropriation resulted in only one municipality (Sterling, which experienced both a decline in state-owned land value and acreage) receiving a lower PILOT payment than during the previous fiscal year. Conversely, had the program's appropriation remained level between FY 2023 and FY 2024, 143 municipalities would have received smaller reimbursements, as seen in Figure 22.

Figure 22 — Hypothetical Change in PILOT Reimbursements under Level Appropriation, FY 2023–FY 2024¹¹⁸

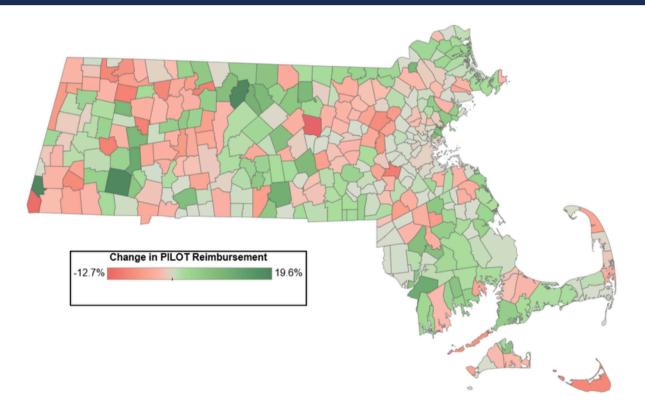


Figure 23 illustrates how some municipalities would have been negatively impacted by level appropriations to the PILOT program by highlighting five towns that would have the largest reductions in reimbursements.¹¹⁹ Note that this group of municipalities all experienced appreciation in state-owned land values *below* the state average, while the group of cities and towns in Figure 24 experienced appreciation *above* the state average, which would have resulted in higher reimbursements.

Had state appropriations not increased during this period, the municipalities in Figure 23 would have, in effect, transferred the amount shown in the fifth column to other cities and towns; the municipalities in Figure 24 would have, in effect, received the amount shown in the fifth column in Figure 24 from other cities and towns.

Figure 23 — Hypothetical Largest Declines in PILOT Reimbursements under Level Appropriation, FY 2023–FY 2024¹²⁰

	Municipality	FY 2023 icipality County PILOT		FY 2024 PILOT (Under Level Appropriation)	\$ Change in PILOT Reimbursement	% Change in PILOT Reimbursement	Increase in State-Owned Land Value (FY 2023-24)
	Dover	Norfolk	\$93,924	\$84,762	(\$9,162)	(9.8%)	0.8%
ŀ	Goshen	Hampshire	\$54,135	\$49,014	(\$5,121)	(9.5%)	1.2%
	Hawley	Franklin	\$81,576	\$73,985	(\$7,591)	(9.3%)	1.3%
	Erving	Franklin	\$68,220	\$61,920	(\$6,300)	(9.2%)	1.4%
	Middlefield	Hampshire	\$75,753	\$68,927	(\$6,826)	(9.0%)	1.7%

Figure 24 — Hypothetical Largest Increases in PILOT Reimbursements under Level Appropriation, FY 2023–FY 2024¹²¹

Munic	ipality	County	FY 2023 PILOT	FY 2024 PILOT (Under Level Appropriation)	\$ Change in PILOT Reimbursement	% Change in PILOT Reimbursement	Increase in State-Owned Land Value (FY 2023-24)
Egrer	nont	Berkshire	\$242,244	\$289,620	\$47,376	19.6%	33.6%
Blanc	lford	Hampden	\$28,472	\$33,984	\$5,512	19.4%	33.4%
Ath	nol	Worcester	\$79,020	\$94,055	\$15,035	19.0%	33.0%
Huntir	ngton	Hampshire	\$52,416	\$58,946	\$6,530	12.5%	25.7%
Fall F	River	Bristol	\$500,521	\$561,897	\$61,375	12.3%	25.4%

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

An overwhelming majority of protected state-owned land eligible for PILOT reimbursement is used for conservation and recreational purposes. These lands provide environmental and public health benefits to residents and tourists alike and are protected from development under Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution.¹²² However, cities and towns with protected land holdings are negatively impacted by reimbursements dependent on an outdated funding formula that relies too heavily on market values to establish their state-owned land value.

Municipalities in western Massachusetts are home to some of the state's largest forests, parks, WMAs, and reservations, which represent more than 14% of the region's total land area and one-fifth of the region's total land value.¹²³ These municipalities receive some of the lowest PILOT reimbursements per acre and also lack significant commercial development, limiting their ability to raise tax revenue for essential public services.¹²⁴ As the state strives to conserve more land to meet its environmental goals, these municipalities will be at increased risk of receiving even more inequitable reimbursements if the Commonwealth continues to concentrate its land acquisitions in the region.

DLM recommends the following reforms to address the funding inequities resulting from the state-owned land PILOT program:

- 1. Target annual supplemental funding to municipalities with PILOT reimbursements per acre below the state median to account for the conservation and recreation value of their protected land.
- 2. Increase PILOT funding by at least the average percentage change in state owned land values to protect municipalities experiencing lower land value growth from losing funding to municipalities with higher land value growth.
- 3. Establish a hold-harmless safeguard to provide funding stability so municipalities can plan for future expenditures knowing their funding will not decrease year by year.

Recommendation #1: Target annual supplemental funding to municipalities with PILOT reimbursements per acre below the state median to account for the conservation and recreation value of their protected land.

One way to address disparities in the state-owned land program is to provide supplemental funding to municipalities that receive disproportionately low PILOT reimbursement rates per acre due to historical state-owned land valuation practices focused on development potential. For this recommendation, DLM classifies disproportionately low reimbursement rates as rates that fall below the state median.¹²⁵ DLM proposes the development of a funding floor to ensure that qualifying municipalities receive a certain dollar amount for each acre of protected land dedicated to conservation and recreation, in recognition of the benefits provided to all residents of the Commonwealth. Under this recommendation, municipalities would still receive their reimbursements from the existing PILOT formula, in addition to supplemental funding computed using the following proposed mechanism:

How the Conservation and Recreation Floor Would Work:

If a municipality's PILOT per acre is less than the funding floor, DLM recommends using the following formula:

funding floor per acre — Municipality's PILOT per acre

municipality's acreage of protected conservation and recreation land

Additionally, there is flexibility to build on this proposal. DLM recommends that the conservation and recreation floor be changed biennially by the percentage change in statewide equalized valuation, similar to how state-owned land is currently revalued (see <u>Figure 8</u>), or by some other appropriate adjustment factor.

Purpose	To recognize the value of protected conservation and recreation land (e.g., parks, forests, WMAs) for municipalities with disproportionately low PILOT reimbursement rates per acre (below the state median of \$127 per acre as of FY 2024). Serves as a supplement to existing PILOT reimbursements.					
Estimated Supplemental Funding ¹²⁶	\$50 Floor: \$5.8 million \$75 Floor: \$12.3 million \$100 Floor: \$20.1 million \$125 Floor: \$28.6 million					
Most Impacted Regions	Parts of western, central, and southeastern Massachusetts would receive benefits at higher floor levels.					

The following examples show a range of financial investments and impacts on municipalities under this proposed conservation and recreation floor.

\$50 Conservation and Recreation Floor

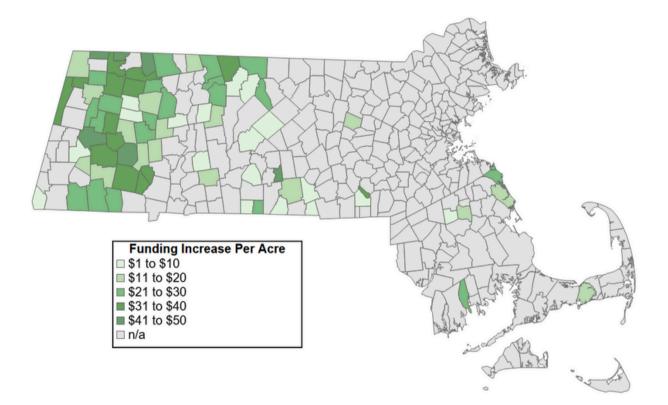
A \$50 floor would improve equity among municipalities receiving PILOT reimbursements and serve as an investment to recognize the environmental and public health benefits of protected land. Funding from the \$50 floor would be distributed to the bottom 25% of PILOT municipalities based on reimbursements per acre. As a result, 1 in 4 municipalities (or 75 cities and towns) would see supplemental funding at this level.

The town of Hancock, as one example, hosts nearly 5,900 acres of protected land dedicated to conservation and recreation and is compensated at a rate of \$12 per acre in the PILOT program.¹²⁷ Hancock would need substantial supplemental funding to meet the \$50 per acre floor, as seen below:¹²⁸



Figure 26 shows that the \$50 floor would have its most significant impact on municipalities located in the western region of the state. DLM estimates that this proposal would have cost over \$5.8 million had it been implemented in FY2024, based on available state-owned land data.¹²⁹

Figure 26 — \$50 Conservation and Recreation Floor, Increase in Funding per Acre¹³⁰



\$75 Conservation and Recreation Floor

Increasing the floor to \$75 would allow for a wider distribution of supplemental funds to cities and towns. DLM estimates that this higher floor would make an additional 31 municipalities eligible for supplemental funding; in total, 106 municipalities would receive supplemental funding. For example, the town of Douglas, which has almost 5,900 acres belonging to the Douglas State Forest and a WMA, is one of the municipalities that would receive funds from the \$75 conservation and recreation floor.¹³¹ In this scenario, Douglas would receive an additional \$13 per acre, or more than \$77,000 in supplemental funding.¹³²

<u>\$75 Conservation and Recreation Floor for the</u> <u>Town of Douglas</u>

FY 2024 PILOT reimbursement: **\$364,947** FY 2024 PILOT per acre: **\$62** Conservation and recreation acres: **5,896.58** Total state-owned land acres: **5,896.58**

Conservation and recreation supplement:

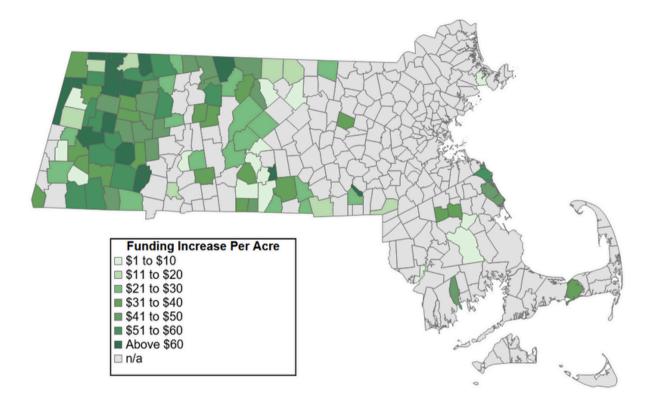
(\$75 - \$62) x 5,896.58 = **\$77,297**

PILOT reimbursement with conservation and recreation supplement: \$364,947 + \$77,297 = **\$442,244**

Supplemental funding per acre: \$13

DLM estimates that funding this proposal would have cost \$12.3 million had it been implemented in FY 2024 and would impact the cities and towns shown in Figure 27.¹³³

Figure 27 — \$75 Conservation and Recreation Floor, Increase in Funding per Acre¹³⁴



\$100 Conservation and Recreation Floor

Raising the floor to \$100 per acre would impact 128 cities and towns. Municipalities from central and southeastern Massachusetts would start to experience a financial benefit from this increased floor, as multiple municipalities from these regions currently receive below \$100 per acre in PILOT reimbursements.

At least 22 additional municipalities would join this eligibility group, including Princeton, which is home to the Mount Wachusett State Reservation among other protected land.¹³⁵

\$100 Conservation and Recreation Floor for the Town of Princeton

FY 2024 PILOT reimbursement: **\$329,739** FY 2024 PILOT per acre: **\$81** Conservation and recreation acres: **3,829.13** Total state-owned land acres: **4,063.13**

Conservation and recreation supplement:

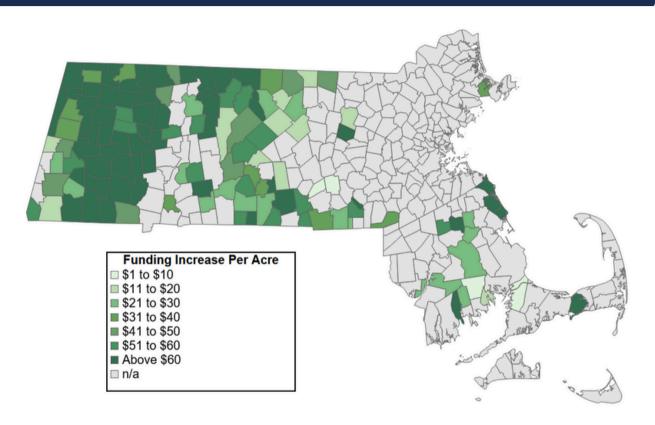
(\$100 - \$81) x 3,829.13 = **\$72,164**

PILOT reimbursement with conservation and recreation supplement: \$329,739 + \$72,164 = **\$401,903**

Supplemental funding per acre: \$18

Figure 28 illustrates the projected effect of this proposal on participating municipalities.¹³⁶ DLM estimates that this proposal would have cost \$20.1 million if it had been implemented in FY 2024.¹³⁷

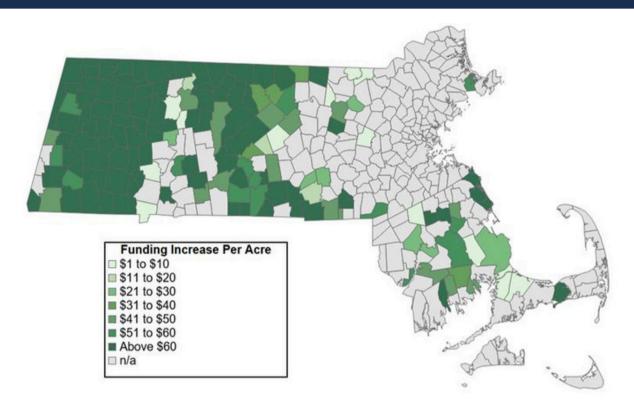
Figure 28 — \$100 Conservation and Recreation Floor – Increase in Funding per Acre¹³⁸



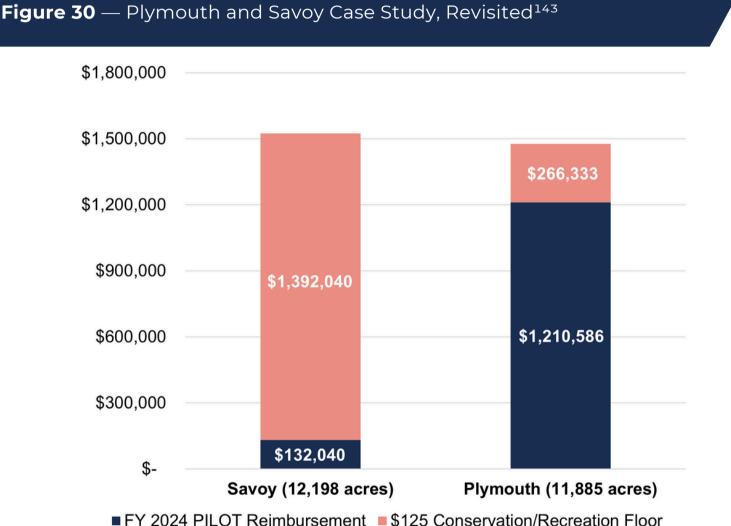
\$125 Conservation and Recreation Floor

Implementing a \$125 floor would bring nearly all municipalities up to the median PILOT reimbursement per acre (\$127 as of FY2024).¹³⁹ This floor would essentially provide supplemental funding to all cities and towns that receive PILOT reimbursements per acre below the state median, as seen in Figure 29. In total, 147 out of 297 participating municipalities would benefit from the \$125 floor.

Figure 29 — \$125 Conservation and Recreation Floor – Increase in Funding per Acre¹⁴⁰



The benefit of the \$125 floor can be illustrated by revisiting the earlier comparison of the towns of Plymouth and Savoy (see Figure 30). Savoy, for example, would have received an estimated \$1.4 million in supplemental funding from the \$125 conservation and recreation floor in FY2024 (compared to over \$132,000 in PILOT reimbursements that it actually received.)¹⁴¹ The \$125 floor would elevate Savoy's total funding to a level comparable to that of Plymouth's; Plymouth received \$1.2 million in PILOT reimbursements and would have received an estimated \$266,000 in supplemental funding from the \$125 conservation and recreation floor in FY 2024.142

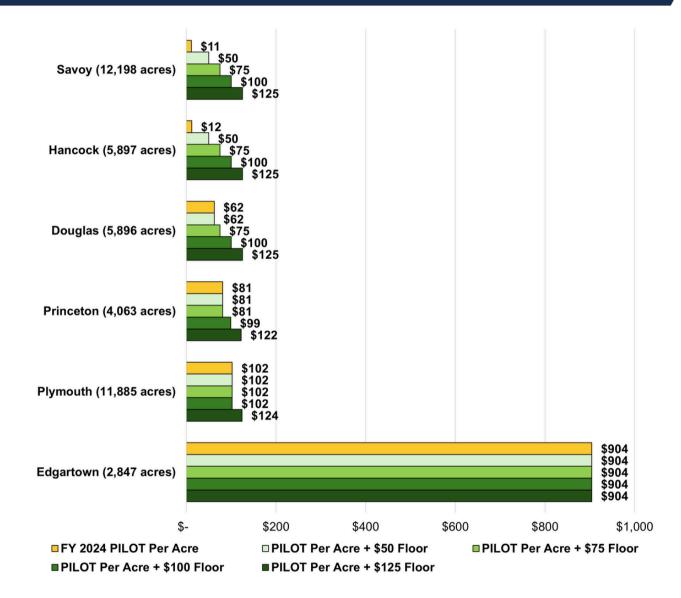


DLM estimates \$28.6 million would have been needed to fund the \$125 floor had it been implemented in FY2024. DLM notes that increasing the floor past \$125 would distribute supplemental funding to municipalities that already receive PILOT reimbursements per acre above the state median.

42

Figure 31 below summarizes the estimated impact per acre of the various conservation and recreation floor levels on six municipalities. These municipalities were selected as examples as they all have significant concentrations of protected state-owned land. DLM encourages readers to access the <u>interactive dashboard</u> and click on "DLM Proposal: Conservation and Recreation Floor". This tool allows readers to input different floor levels and explore the impact on municipalities.

Figure 31 — Estimated Impact of Conservation and Recreation Floor Supplemental Funding (Examples)¹⁴⁴



Recommendation #2: Increase PILOT funding by at least the average percentage change in state-owned land values to protect municipalities experiencing lower land value growth from losing funding to municipalities with higher land value growth.

Funding of the PILOT program is subject to state appropriation.¹⁴⁵ To ensure that municipalities receive PILOT reimbursements that account for changes in state-owned land values, DLM recommends that the Commonwealth commit to a PILOT program appropriation that increases *at a rate equivalent to or greater than the average percentage change in state-owned land values* (hereinafter "equivalent change funding"). Figure 32 illustrates how many municipalities would have been negatively impacted had a sufficient appropriation increase not occurred in FY 2024. The negative impacts are significantly reduced once the PILOT appropriation increases at a rate equivalent to the average in state-owned land values of 12.1%.¹⁴⁶

Figure 32 —	Figure 32 — Estimated Shortfalls to the State-Owned Land PILOT					
	Program in FY 2024, Assuming Level Funding from Prior					
	Fiscal Year ¹⁴⁷					

Hypothetical Increase in PILOT Appropriation	Hypothetical PILOT Appropriation	Hypothetical Shortfall	# of Impacted Municipalities	
Level to FY 2023	\$45,000,000	\$712,782	143	
1%	\$45,450,000	\$509,422	113	
5%	\$47,250,000	\$130,970	29	
10%	10% \$49,500,000		6	
12.1% \$50,445,000		\$0	O ¹⁴⁸	

Figure 33 illustrates the change necessary in the PILOT program appropriation to match the average increase in state-owned land values between FY 2020 and FY 2024.¹⁴⁹ As shown here, the Commonwealth has met this funding level since FY 2021. It is important to note that if this trend does not continue, some, or even many, cities and towns will experience shortfalls in PILOT reimbursements. As highlighted in <u>Finding 4</u>, appropriation increases lower than the equivalent change funding would cause municipalities with the strongest growth in property values to receive larger reimbursements, while cities and towns with the lowest growth would receive less. In these instances, the increased funding for some cities and towns would be funded through the reduced reimbursements provided to other municipalities.

Figure 33 — Equivalent Change Funding Estimates for the State-Owned Land PILOT Program, FY 2020–FY 2024¹⁵⁰

Fiscal Year	State-Owned Land Value	Average % Change in State-Owned Land Value	Actual PILOT Appropriation	Change in PILOT Appropriation	Equivalent Change Funding Needed	Equivalent Change Funding Met?
2020151	\$3,146,119,500	8.5%	\$30,000,000	5.3%	\$30,898,772	NO
2021	\$3,168,553,800	1.1%	\$31,000,000	3.3%	\$30,330,000	YES
2022	\$3,516,952,900	11.2%	\$35,000,000	12.9%	\$34,472,000	YES
2023	\$3,526,847,500	0.4%	\$45,000,000	28.6%	\$35,140,000	YES
2024	\$3,940,528,300	12.1%	\$51,465,476	14.4%	\$50,445,000	YES

State-owned land is revalued every two years.¹⁵² In years when land is not revalued, DLM recommends changes to the appropriation to reflect the addition (or disposal) of state-owned land so that increases in the number of acres in the program do not reduce the average reimbursement per acre. Tracking the growth in state-owned land values from the previous fiscal year can help the Commonwealth identify the need for future investments in this program. The Department of Revenue (DOR) sets preliminary state-owned land values at the start of each year, which should aid the Commonwealth in its budgetary planning.¹⁵³

<u>Recommendation #3: Establish a hold-harmless</u> <u>safeguard to provide funding stability so</u> <u>municipalities can plan for future expenditures</u> <u>knowing their funding will not decrease year by year.</u>

DLM recommends that *at a minimum* the state implement a hold-harmless provision in the PILOT reimbursement program. A hold-harmless provision will prevent decreases in PILOT reimbursements to individual cities and towns in the event funding for the program is not adjusted to reflect increases in state-owned land values. This will allow municipalities to anticipate future reimbursements when setting their annual budgets. In other words, hold-harmless will help ensure that municipalities receive the same level of funding as in the previous fiscal year even if their calculated PILOT reimbursement would normally be lower, ensuring that they will not be "harmed" by external factors that impact the calculation.

As illustrated in <u>Figure 22</u>, if the program's appropriation had not increased between FY 2023 and FY 2024, 143 municipalities would have received smaller reimbursements.¹⁵⁴

There is precedent for the application of a hold-harmless provision in connection with PILOT programs. For example, the Commonwealth implemented a one-time hold-harmless clause for the state-owned land PILOT program in FY2019 to minimize the effects of the program's updated formula and valuation process.¹⁵⁵ Likewise, a separate PILOT program that compensates municipalities hosting watershed land includes a hold-harmless clause enshrined in state law: *"In no event shall any city or town receive an amount less than the payment received […] in the prior fiscal year."*¹⁵⁶

CLOSING

This report provides a fresh perspective on the state-owned land PILOT program. These findings and recommendations are intended to help legislators, the Administration, and all concerned residents and stakeholders in their decision-making processes meant to address these issues. The Division of Local Mandates has created an <u>interactive dashboard</u>, where users can explore how the report's findings and recommendations impact individual communities and regions.



Walden Pond State Reservation, Concord, MA

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NOTES

¹ M.G.L. c. 58, § 13, defines *state-owned land* for purposes of the PILOT program. The program does not provide reimbursement for the value of improvements made to land, for land held by state agencies not identified in the statute, or for land previously held by tax-exempt entities.

² For purposes of this report, *protected land* is defined as state-owned land that is primarily used for conservation and/or recreation and has significant limitations on development; *developed land* is defined as state-owned land that is not *protected land*.

³ DLM's analysis on the state-owned land PILOT program primarily focuses on data from FY 2024, unless otherwise specified. See Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, (2023, April). *FY 2024 State-Owned Land Inventory and Reimbursable Acres*, on file with DLM.

⁴ See An Act Modernizing Municipal Finance and Government, St. 2016, c. 218, § 108.

Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, 5 November 21). sheet Cherry detail by program. https://dlsqateway.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx? rdReport=CherrySheets.cherrysheetdetail main; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). State owned land values. https://dlsqateway.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx? rdReport=BLA.StateOwnedLand

⁶ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, (2023, April). *FY2024 State-Owned Land Inventory and Reimbursable Acres*, on file with DLM; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*.

⁷ Id.

⁸ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, (2023, April). *FY2024 State-Owned Land Inventory and Reimbursable Acres*, on file with DLM; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values.* ⁹ For purposes of this report, we refer to municipalities with over 1,000 acres of protected land as having large holdings of protected land.

¹⁰ The median reimbursement for this group of municipalities was \$42 per acre as of FY 2024. *See* Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*.

¹¹ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program*; Massachusetts Office of the State Auditor, Division of Local Mandates. (2020, December 10). *The impact of the state-owned land PILOT and solar taxation policies on municipalities*. <u>https://www.mass.gov/report/the-impact-of-the-state-owned-land-pilot-and-solar-taxation-policies-on-municipalities</u>

¹² Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program*. Eligibility for reimbursement is limited to land held by select state agencies specified under statute; only previously taxable land belonging to these agencies is included in the program. *See <u>Background</u>* and M.G.L. c. 58, § 13, as amended by St. 2023, c. 28, § 27 (effective July 1, 2023).

¹³ Massachusetts Office of the State Auditor, Division of Local Mandates. (2020, December 10). *The impact of the state-owned land PILOT and solar taxation policies on municipalities*, at 27-29 (hereinafter "DLM 2020 report"). <u>https://www.mass.gov/report/the-impact-of-the-state-owned-land-pilot-and-solar-taxation-policies-on-municipalities</u>.

¹⁴ See An Act Modernizing Municipal Finance and Government, St. 2016, c. 218, § 108.

¹⁵ See DLM 2020 report, at 11–14, 27–31; see also An Act Modernizing Municipal Finance and Government, St. 2016, c. 218, §§ 108–109, 252.

¹⁶ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program.* <u>https://dlsgateway.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx?</u> <u>rdReport=CherrySheets.cherrysheetdetail main</u> ¹⁷ DLM's analysis on the state-owned land PILOT program primarily focuses on data from FY 2024, unless otherwise specified. See Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*. <u>https://dlsgateway.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx?</u> <u>rdReport=BLA.StateOwnedLand</u>

¹⁸ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program.*

¹⁹ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, (2023, April). FY 2024 State-Owned Land Inventory and Reimbursable Acres, on file with DLM.

²⁰ DLM's definition of protected land is in line with the Oxford Dictionary of Environment and Conservation's (1st edition, 2012) definition of "protected area": "Land that is set aside, usually for conservation purposes, where development is banned or seriously restricted." Further methodology on defining protected state-owned land can be found in <u>Appendix B</u>.

²¹ Massachusetts Rural Policy Advisory Commission. (2019, October). *Rural policy plan for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts*, at 70-73. <u>https://frcog.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/RPP-Final-Draft-10.10.19.pdf</u>; Rural Commonwealth. (2018, September). *Parks & restitution: state-owned land causing financial pain in rural Massachusetts*, at 5, on file with DLM; Letter from Plainfield town officials, 9/14/2023, on file with DLM; Letter from Goshen town officials, 9/22/2023, on file with DLM.

²² Id.

²³ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). State owned land values. <u>https://dlsgateway.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx?</u> <u>rdReport=BLA.StateOwnedLand</u>; Meeting with Rep. McKenna, 9/29/23, on file with DLM; Meeting with Rep. Barrett, 9/25/23, on file with DLM.

²⁴ Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. (2022, June 30). *Massachusetts clean energy and climate plan for 2025 and 2030*. <u>https://www.mass.gov/doc/clean-energy-and-climate-plan-for-2025-and-2030/download</u>; Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. (2022, December). *Clean energy and climate plan for 2050*. <u>https://www.mass.gov/doc/2050-clean-energy-and-climate-plan/download</u>

²⁵ See M.G.L. c. 58, § 13.

²⁶ See id.

²⁷ Massachusetts Division of Capital Asset Management & Maintenance. (2023, February 15). Report on the real property owned and leased by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. <u>https://www.mass.gov/doc/annual-real-property-report-</u> <u>2023/download</u>; Meeting with Former Barnstable Town Assessor, August 25, 2023, on file with DLM.

²⁸ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, (2023, April). *FY 2024 State-Owned Land Inventory and Reimbursable Acres*, on file with DLM.

²⁹ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, (2023, April). *FY 2024 State-Owned Land Inventory and Reimbursable Acres*, on file with DLM.

³⁰ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, (2023, April). *FY 2024 State-Owned Land Inventory and Reimbursable Acres*, on file with DLM.

³¹ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*. <u>https://dlsgateway.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx?</u> <u>rdReport=BLA.StateOwnedLand</u>

³² For the purposes of this report, western Massachusetts represents municipalities located in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden, and Hampshire counties, and central Massachusetts represents municipalities located in Worcester County. *See* Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values.*

³³ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program*. <u>https://dlsgateway.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx?</u> <u>rdReport=CherrySheets.cherrysheetdetail main</u>

³⁴ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values.*

³⁵ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*; Massachusetts Bureau of Geographic Information. (2024, May). *MassGIS Data: Municipalities* (see field AREA_ACRES). <u>https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-municipalities</u>

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³⁶ Massachusetts Division of Capital Asset Management & Maintenance. (2023, February 15). *Report on the real property owned and leased by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts*. Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, (2023, April). *FY 2024 State-Owned Land Inventory and Reimbursable Acres*, on file with DLM.

³⁷ Land not included in this figure includes land held by MassDOT, Massport, and the MBTA. Some municipalities with watershed land included in this figure receive reimbursements under a separate PILOT program. *See* Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2023, April). *FY 2024 State-Owned Land Inventory and Reimbursable Acres*, on file with DLM; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*; Massachusetts Division of Capital Asset Management & Maintenance. (2023, February 15). *Report on the real property owned and leased by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts*.

³⁸ See An Act Modernizing Municipal Finance and Government, St. 2016, c. 218, § 108.; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2020, January). State-owned land program under M.G.L. c. 58, §§ 13-17: Frequently asked questions. <u>https://www.mass.gov/doc/state-owned-land-faq/download</u>

³⁹ A municipality's equalized valuation is the value of all its taxable residential, personal, commercial, and industrial properties determined as "full and fair" market value. See M.G.L. c. 58, §§ 9-10C, 13–14.

⁴⁰ DLM selected Southampton to represent a municipality that experienced growth in state-owned land values close to the state median (11.8%).

⁴¹ To determine the current fiscal year state-owned land value in a municipality, the statute looks at the difference between the two most recent equalized valuations (determined by the Commonwealth every two years) and applies the difference to the municipality's state-owned land value as of January 1 of the previous fiscal year. M.G.L. c. 58, § 13. For FY 2024, the two most recent equalized valuations were in FY 2020 and FY 2022. See Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). State owned land values. Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2023, December 27). Equalized values (EQV). https://dlsgateway.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx? rdReport=PropertyTaxInformation.EQV.EQV

⁴² M.G.L. c. 58, § 17.

⁴³ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*.

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⁴⁴ Guzman, D. & Cole, K. (2024, April 16). New data show Mass. home prices keep rising as inventory remains low. <u>https://www.wbur.org/news/2024/04/16/massachusetts-houses-march-real-estatedata</u>; Massachusetts Association of Realtors. (2024, August). Local market update – August 2024. <u>https://www.marealtor.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/2024-08 Regions.pdf</u>

⁴⁵ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values.*

⁴⁶ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values.*

⁴⁷ Id.

⁴⁸ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values.*

⁴⁹ Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, Bureau of Forest Fire Control and Forestry. (2024). *Managing our forests… for carbon benefits*. <u>https://www.mass.gov/info-details/managing-our-forests-for-carbon-benefits</u>

⁵⁰ See An Act Creating a Next-Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy, St. 2021, c. 8.

⁵¹ Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. (2022, June 30). *Massachusetts clean energy and climate plan for 2025 and 2030*. <u>https://www.mass.gov/doc/clean-energy-and-climate-plan-for-2025-and-2030/download</u>; Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. (2022, December). *Clean energy and climate plan for 2050*. <u>https://www.mass.gov/doc/2050-clean-energy-and-climate-plan/download</u>

⁵² Natural and working lands are defined as "[l]ands within the Commonwealth that: (1) are actively used by an agricultural owner or operator for an agricultural operation that includes, but is not limited to, active engagement in farming or ranching; (2) produce forest products; (3) consist of forests, grasslands, freshwater, and riparian systems, wetlands, coastal and estuarine areas, watersheds, wildlands or wildlife habitats; or (4) are used for recreational purposes, including parks, urban and community forests, trails, or other similar open space lands." Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. (2022, December). *Clean energy and climate plan for 2050*, at 17.

⁵³ Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. (2022, June 30). *Massachusetts clean energy and climate plan for 2025 and 2030*, at 80; Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. (2022, December). *Clean energy and climate plan for 2050*, at 85.

⁵⁴ Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. (2022, June 30). *Massachusetts clean energy and climate plan for 2025 and 2030*, at 80-81.

⁵⁵ *Id*., at 83–84.

⁵⁶ *Id.*, at xvi; 80-81; Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. (2022, December). *Clean energy and climate plan for 2050*, at 93.

⁵⁷ Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. (2022, June 30). *Massachusetts clean energy and climate plan for 2025 and 2030*, at 82 (see Figure 8.1.); Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. (2020). *Massachusetts state forest action plan*—2020, <u>https://www.mass.gov/doc/massachusetts-forest-action-plan/download</u>, at 5.

⁵⁸ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2009). *FY 2009 State-Owned Land Values*, on file with DLM; Massachusetts Office of the State Auditor, Division of Local Mandates. (1994, October). *A review of the financial impact of the c. 58 payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILOT) program on Massachusetts cities and towns*, at Appendix D. <u>https://www.mass.gov/doc/payment-in-lieu-of-taxes-pilot/download</u>

⁵⁹ Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. (2022, June 30). *Massachusetts clean energy and climate plan for 2025 and 2030*, at 91-92.

⁶⁰ Id.

⁶¹ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2009). *FY 2009 State-Owned Land Values*, on file with DLM; Massachusetts Office of the State Auditor, Division of Local Mandates. (1994, October). *A review of the financial impact of the c. 58 payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILOT) program on Massachusetts cities and towns*, at Appendix D. ⁶² Past correspondence with Department of Revenue staff members, February 27, 2020, and October 2, 2020, on file with DLM. *See also* DLM 2020 report at 29. <u>https://www.mass.gov/report/the-impact-of-the-state-owned-land-pilot-and-solar-taxation-policies-on-municipalities</u>

⁶³ Id.

⁶⁴ See An Act Modernizing Municipal Finance and Government, St. 2016, c. 218, § 108.

⁶⁵ A public good (in economics) refers to "any good or commodity whose benefits are available to everyone, from which no one can be excluded, and from which no single individual can enjoy all of the benefits." Oxford University Press. (2012). *A dictionary of environment and conservation*, 1st edition. "Total economic value" refers to "[t]he overall economic value of a particular natural resource, taking into account both use and non-use values." Oxford University Press. (2012). *A dictionary of environment and conservation*, 1st edition.

⁶⁶ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Municipal cherry sheet, receipts & charges.* <u>https://dlsgateway.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx?</u>

rdReport=CherrySheets.CSbyProgMunis.cs prog munis; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, (2023, April). *FY2024 State-Owned Land Inventory and Reimbursable Acres*, on file with DLM; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values.* <u>https://dlsgateway.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx?</u> <u>rdReport=BLA.StateOwnedLand</u>.

⁶⁷ National Research Council of the National Academies Press. (2005). Valuing ecosystem services: toward better environmental decision-making, at 44-47. https://doi.org/10.17226/11139; Haefele, M., Loomis, J., & Blimes, L.J. (2020). Total economic valuation of the National Park Service lands and programs: results of a survey of the American public. In Blimes, L.J. & Loomis, J.B. (Eds.), Valuing U.S. National Parks and programs, at 13, 17-20); Buckley, R.C., & Brough, P. (2017, March 16). Economic value of parks via human mental health: an analytical framework. **Frontiers** Ecology and Evolution. 5(16). 3-4. in at https://doi.org/10.3389/fevo.2017.00016

⁶⁸ Buckley, R.C., & Brough, P. (2017, March 16). Economic value of parks via human mental health: an analytical framework, at 3-4; Jimenez, M.P., DeVille, N.V., Elliott, E.G., Schiff, J.E., Wilt, G.E., Hart, J.E., & James, P. (2021, April 30). Associations between nature exposure and health: a review of the evidence. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. 18(9), at 3-10. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18094790; Lackey, N.Q., Tysor, D.A., McNay, D., Joyner, L., Baker, K.H., & Hodge, C. (2021). Mental health benefits of nature based recreation: a systematic review. Annals of Leisure Research 24(3), at 386-388. https://doi.org/10.1080/11745398.2019.1655459

⁶⁹ Id.

⁷⁰ Also known as "existence use" and "passive use" values in academic literature. See National Research Council of the National Academies Press. (2005). Valuing ecosystem services: toward better environmental decision-making, at 44–47.

⁷¹ L.J. & Loomis, J.B. (Eds.), *Valuing U.S. National Parks and programs*, at 17–20; National Research Council of the National Academies Press. (2005). *Valuing ecosystem services: toward better environmental decision-making*, at 44–47; Neher, C., Duffield, J. & Patterson, D. (2013). Valuation of National Park System visitation: the efficient use of count data models, meta-analysis, and secondary visitor survey data. *Environmental Management* (52), at 683–698. <u>https://doi.org/10.1007/s00267-013-0080-2</u>

⁷² Per acre estimate calculated by DLM. See Blimes, L.J. & Loomis, J.B. (Eds.), *Valuing U.S. National Parks and programs*, at 1, 39.

⁷³ Conversation with Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts, on file with DLM; Conversation with Franklin Regional Council of Governments, on file with DLM; Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. (2023, January.) *Resilient Lands Initiative Expanding nature's benefits across the Commonwealth: a vision and strategy*, at 20. <u>https://www.mass.gov/doc/the-resilient-lands-initiative-2023/download</u>

⁷⁴ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program.* <u>https://dlsgateway.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx?</u> <u>rdReport=CherrySheets.cherrysheetdetail main;</u> Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values.*

⁷⁵ Id.

⁷⁶ Id.

⁷⁷ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values.*

⁷⁸ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2023, April). *FY 2024 State-Owned Land Inventory and Reimbursable Acres*, on file with DLM; Massachusetts Division of Capital Asset Management & Maintenance. (2023, February 15). *Report on the real property owned and leased by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts*. <u>https://www.mass.gov/doc/annual-real-property-report-2023/download</u>

⁷⁹ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, (2023, April). *FY 2024 State-Owned Land Inventory and Reimbursable Acres,* on file with DLM.

⁸⁰ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program*.

⁸¹ Plymouth's developed land includes land used by the Massachusetts Maritime Academy and the Plymouth County Correctional Facility. See Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, (2023, April). *FY 2024 State-Owned Land Inventory and Reimbursable Acres*, on file with DLM.

⁸² Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program*.

⁸³ Id.

⁸⁴ Id.

⁸⁵ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Municipal cherry sheet, receipts & charges*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, (2023, April). *FY 2024 State-Owned Land Inventory and Reimbursable Acres*, on file with DLM; Massachusetts Bureau of Geographic Information. (2024, May). *MassGIS Data: Municipalities* (see field AREA_ACRES). <u>https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-municipalities</u>; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*.

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⁸⁶ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program*.

⁸⁷ Id.

⁸⁸ Id.

⁸⁹ DLM discussion with Chester and Middlefield town officials, 8/28/23, on file with DLM; DLM discussion with Adams town officials, 9/12/23, on file with DLM; DLM discussion with Rep. John Barrett and staff, 9/25/23, on file with DLM; DLM discussion with Rep. Joseph McKenna, 9/29/23, on file with DLM.

⁹⁰ See Letter to Auditor DiZoglio, from Goshen town officials, 9/22/23, on file with DLM.; Letter to Auditor DiZoglio from Plainfield town officials, 9/22/23, on file with DLM. See also Massachusetts Office of the State Auditor, Division of Local Mandates. (2021, October 5). *Public infrastructure in western Massachusetts: a critical need for regional investment and revitalization*. <u>https://www.mass.gov/doc/public-infrastructure-in-western-massachusetts-a-critical-need-for-regional-investment-and-</u>

<u>revitalization/download;</u> Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts. (2023, January). *A plan for forest-based economic development & conservation*. <u>https://woodlandspartnership.org/wp-</u>

content/uploads/2023/11/woodlands_partnership_plan_2023_sm.pdf

⁹¹ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values.*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Municipal cherry sheet, receipts & charges.*

⁹² Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values.*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Municipal cherry sheet, receipts & charges*; Massachusetts Bureau of Geographic Information. (2024, May). *MassGIS Data: Municipalities* (see field AREA_ACRES).

⁹³ Id.

⁹⁴ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values.*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Municipal cherry sheet, receipts & charges*; Massachusetts Bureau of Geographic Information. (2024, May). *MassGIS Data: Municipalities* (see field AREA_ACRES). ⁹⁵ Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts. (2023, January). *A plan for forest-based economic development & conservation*, at 10-12. DLM identified municipalities in Northwest Massachusetts by using municipalities listed in the Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts, the Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont Regional School Districts, and the Mohawk Trail local tourism organization. Additional municipalities were added based on their proximity to the Mohawk Trail on Route 2. *See* Visit the towns that make up the *Mohawk Trail region*. (n.d.) Mohawk Trail Region. <u>https://www.mohawktrail.com/towns;</u> Our schools. (n.d.); *Mohawk Trail/Hawlemont Regional School Districts*. <u>https://www.mtrsd.org/Our-Schools</u>

⁹⁶ Municipalities in northwest Massachusetts face some socioeconomic issues. Cities and towns from the region have faced development losses because of the departure of businesses such as farm operations, paper mills, and factories, and have experienced a shrinking labor force alongside lower-than-average wages. Smaller towns in northwest Massachusetts also struggle to attract industrial or commercial businesses due to a lack of water and sewer infrastructure. Aging populations with fixed incomes and a decline of residents living in the region further exacerbate these issues. See Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts. (2023, January). A *plan for forest-based economic development & conservation*, at 12, 21-22, 56–57, 76.

⁹⁷ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2023, April). *FY2024 State-Owned Land Inventory and Reimbursable Acres*, on file with DLM; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*; Massachusetts Division of Capital Asset Management & Maintenance. (2023, February 15). *Report on the real property owned and leased by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program.*

⁹⁸ Massachusetts Bureau of Geographic Information. (2024, May). *MassGIS Data: Municipalities* (see field AREA_ACRES).

⁹⁹ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2023, April). *FY 2024 State-Owned Land Inventory and Reimbursable Acres*, on file with DLM; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*.; Massachusetts Division of Capital Asset Management & Maintenance. (2023, February 15). *Report on the real property owned and leased by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts*.; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program*. ¹⁰⁰ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2023, April). *FY 2024 State-Owned Land Inventory and Reimbursable Acres*, on file with DLM. Massachusetts Bureau of Geographic Information. (2024, May). *MassGIS Data: Municipalities* (see field AREA_ACRES).

¹⁰¹ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values.*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program.* Massachusetts Bureau of Geographic Information. (2024, May). *MassGIS Data: Municipalities* (see field AREA_ACRES).

¹⁰² Meeting with Adams town officials, September 12, 2023, on file with DLM.

¹⁰³ Although acreage acquired in the region between FY 2019 and FY 2024 is minimal compared to existing substantial state-owned land holdings, municipal officials have expressed concerns regarding continued disproportionate acquisitions of land in the region. See Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*.

¹⁰⁴ Meeting with Rep. Barrett and staff, September 25, 2023, on file with DLM; Meeting with Adams town officials, September 12, 2023, on file with DLM.

¹⁰⁵ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values.*

¹⁰⁶ *Id.,* Massachusetts Bureau of Geographic Information. (2024, May). *MassGIS Data: Municipalities* (see field AREA_ACRES).

¹⁰⁷ Id.

¹⁰⁸ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*. There were zero state-owned land acquisitions in Suffolk County (which includes Boston), Dukes County, and Nantucket County during this period.

¹⁰⁹ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*.

¹¹⁰ See Figure 15 to see Washington's state-owned land characteristics.

¹¹¹ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2023, April). *FY 2024 State-Owned Land Inventory and Reimbursable Acres*, on file with DLM. Massachusetts Bureau of Geographic Information. (2024, May). *MassGIS Data: Municipalities* (see field AREA_ACRES).

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¹¹² Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, October 21). *Tax levies by class*. <u>https://dlsgateway.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx?</u> <u>rdReport=Dashboard.TrendAnalysisReports.TaxLevyByClass</u>; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, October 21). *Tax rates by class*. <u>https://dlsgateway.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx?</u> <u>rdReport=PropertyTaxInformation.taxratesbyclass.taxratesbyclass_main</u>

¹¹³ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values.*

¹¹⁴ *Id.*

¹¹⁵ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values.* The only municipalities that saw decreases in their state-owned land values during this time were the towns of Mount Washington and Sterling. Sterling also lost state-owned land acreage during this time.

¹¹⁶ Municipalities experiencing declines in state-owned land value and/or acreage may see decreases in PILOT reimbursements. In FY 2024, although two municipalities experienced a decline in their state-owned land value and five municipalities experienced a decline in acreage, an increase in the PILOT appropriation greater than the average percentage change in state-owned land values resulted in only one municipality (Sterling, which experienced declines in both value and acreage) seeing a reduction in its PILOT reimbursement.

¹¹⁷ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*.

¹¹⁸ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*.

¹¹⁹ Id.

¹²⁰ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*.

¹²¹ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*.

¹²² Art. 97 of the Amendments to the Massachusetts Constitution, <u>https://malegislature.gov/Laws/Constitution</u>.

¹²³ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, (2024, January Exempt Percent Values Total 3). as of Value. https://dlsgateway.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=LA4.Totals; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). State owned land values. https://dlsgateway.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx? rdReport=BLA.StateOwnedLand: Massachusetts Bureau of Geographic Information. (2024,May). MassGIS Data: Municipalities (see field AREA ACRES). https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-municipalities.

¹²⁴ Id.

¹²⁵ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*.

¹²⁶ More cities and towns become eligible for supplemental funding as the floor increases. As a result, the cost of implementing the floor grows faster than the floor.

 ¹²⁷ Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). State owned land values; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). Cherry sheet detail by program. <u>https://dlsgateway.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx?</u>
 rdReport=CherrySheets.cherrysheetdetail main

¹²⁸ Calculations for this example are rounded for simplicity and vary from official calculations which are made using unrounded numbers. See <u>Appendix B</u> for methodology.

¹²⁹ See <u>Appendix B</u> for methodology. See also Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2023, April). *FY 2024 State-Owned Land Inventory and Reimbursable Acres*, on file with DLM; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program*.

¹³⁰ See <u>Appendix B</u> for methodology. See also Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2023, April). *FY 2024 State-Owned Land Inventory and Reimbursable Acres*, on file with DLM; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program*.

¹³¹ Id.

¹³² Calculations for this example are rounded for simplicity and vary from official calculations which are made using unrounded numbers. See <u>Appendix B</u> for methodology.

¹³³ See <u>Appendix B</u> for methodology. See also Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2023, April). *FY 2024 State-Owned Land Inventory and Reimbursable Acres*, on file with DLM; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program*.

¹³⁴ See <u>Appendix B</u> for methodology. See also Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2023, April). *FY 2024 State-Owned Land Inventory and Reimbursable Acres*, on file with DLM; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program*.

¹³⁵ Id.

¹³⁶ Calculations for this example are rounded for simplicity and vary from official calculations which are made using unrounded numbers. See <u>Appendix B</u> for methodology.

¹³⁷ See <u>Appendix B</u> for methodology. See also Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2023, April). *FY 2024 State-Owned Land Inventory and Reimbursable Acres*, on file with DLM; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program*.

¹³⁸ See <u>Appendix B</u> for methodology. See also Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2023, April). *FY 2024 State-Owned Land Inventory and Reimbursable Acres*, on file with DLM; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program*.

¹³⁹ *Id.*

¹⁴⁰ See <u>Appendix B</u> for methodology. See also Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2023, April). *FY2024 State-Owned Land Inventory and Reimbursable Acres*, on file with DLM; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program*.

¹⁴¹ *Id.*, <u>Appendix B</u> for methodology.

¹⁴² *Id.*, <u>Appendix B</u> for methodology.

¹⁴³ See <u>Appendix B</u> for methodology. See also Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2023, April). *FY2024 State-Owned Land Inventory and Reimbursable Acres*, on file with DLM; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program*. See <u>Figure 14</u> to review the Savoy-Plymouth case study.

¹⁴⁴ See <u>Appendix B</u> for methodology. See also Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2023, April). *FY 2024 State-Owned Land Inventory and Reimbursable Acres*, on file with DLM; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *State owned land values*; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). *Cherry sheet detail by program*.

¹⁴⁵ M.G.L. c. 58, § 17.

¹⁴⁶ Municipalities experiencing declines in state-owned land value and/or acreage may see decreases in PILOT reimbursements. See <u>Finding 4</u> and footnotes therein. See *also* Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). State owned land values; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). Cherry sheet detail by program.

¹⁴⁷ See <u>Appendix B</u> for methodology. See also Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). State owned land values; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). Cherry sheet detail by program.

¹⁴⁸ While the municipalities of Mount Washington and Sterling would have seen lower PILOT reimbursements, these were the only two municipalities that saw declines in state-owned land value. See <u>Finding 4</u> and footnotes therein.

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¹⁴⁹ See <u>Appendix B</u> for methodology. See also Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). State owned land values; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). Cherry sheet detail by program.

¹⁵⁰ See <u>Appendix B</u> for methodology. See also Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). State owned land values; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2024, November 21). Cherry sheet detail by program.

¹⁵¹ See DLM 2020 report at 29-30, for the impact of the state-owned land PILOT program appropriation on reimbursements between FY 2015 and FY 2020. <u>https://www.mass.gov/report/the-impact-of-the-state-owned-land-pilot-and-solar-taxation-policies-on-municipalities</u>

¹⁵² See M.G.L. c. 58, § 14.

¹⁵³ Final valuations of state-owned land (which are adjustments of preliminary estimates with land acquisitions and deletions) have historically been determined by June 1 of each year. See Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. (2020, January). *State-owned land program under M.G.L. c. 58,* §§ 13-17: *frequently asked questions.* <u>https://www.mass.gov/doc/state-owned-land-faq/download</u>

¹⁵⁴ See <u>Finding 4</u> for further analysis of a scenario of a level-funded PILOT program.

¹⁵⁵ "For reimbursements to cities and towns in lieu of taxes on state-owned land under sections 13 to 17, inclusive, of chapter 58 of the General Laws; provided, that not less than \$1,708,131 shall be expended for one-time, additional reimbursements to cities and towns so that no city or town shall receive an amount from this line item in fiscal year 2019 that is less than the amount said city or town received in fiscal year 2018. . . ." Commonwealth of Massachusetts. (2018). *FY 2019 final budget (line item 1233-2400)*. <u>https://malegislature.gov/Budget/FY2019/FinalBudget</u>

¹⁵⁶ M.G.L. c. 59, § 5G.

APPENDIX A — CONTRIBUTIONS

We want to offer our appreciation to the following organizations and individuals who provided public input, sat for interviews, and shared their perspectives on the stateowned land PILOT program and its impacts on municipalities across Massachusetts. These stakeholders, along with their staff members and subject matter experts, provided significant context and data that were used for this report, although the findings and recommendations contained herein reflect the opinions and the work of the Office of the State Auditor.

- Bob Dean and Linda Dunlavy of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments
- Dicken Crane, Art Schwenger, Kate Conlin, Sam Haupt, Lisa Hayden, Liz Kidder, Bella Levavi, Alain Peteroy, and Mark Phelps of the Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts
- Joanne Comerford, Massachusetts State Senator
- Paul Mark, Massachusetts State Senator
- Bradley Jones, Massachusetts State Representative and Minority Leader
- Shirley Arriaga, Massachusetts State Representative
- Natalie Blais, Massachusetts State Representative
- Joseph McKenna, Massachusetts State Representative
- John Barrett III, Massachusetts State Representative
- Vanessa Farny, Forest & Land Grant Program Manager of the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services
- Richard Conti, Renee Brabant, and Lisa Labelle of the Taunton Board of Assessors
- Lane Partridge; Former Barnstable Director of Assessing and Former President of the Massachusetts Association of Assessing Officers
- Lisa Blackmer, North Adams City Councilor and Business Administrator of the North Berkshire School Union
- Jay Green, Adams Town Administrator

- Paula Wheeler, Adams Assessor
- Andrew Meyers, Chester Town Finance Committee Chair
- Laura Lafreniere, Former Chester Assessor and Clerk
- Dawn Scaparotti, Former Goshen Town Administrator
- Peri Hall and Kristine Bissell, Goshen Select Board Members, and Angela Otis, Former Goshen Select Board Member
- Tamarin Laurel, Middlefield Board of Assessors Chair
- Gina Papineau, Former Plainfield Assistant Town Assessor
- Kent Lew, Former Washington Select Board Member

We also recognize all other senators, representatives, and city and town officials who have connected with the Office of the State Auditor and the Division of Local Mandates on this important endeavor.

APPENDIX B — METHODOLOGY

DLM used various methods to identify inequities in state-owned land PILOT reimbursements. We retrieved most quantitative data from the Municipal Databank developed by the Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services.

Commonwealth Land Holdings: Names and Acreage

a. State-Owned Land

DLM retrieved a list of all state-owned land eligible for PILOT reimbursements in each municipality from DOR's Division of Local Services. This list was last updated in April 2023 and has information such as the state agency that holds the land as well as acreage.

b. Other Commonwealth Land Holdings

DLM identified other Commonwealth land holdings that are not included in the PILOT program by using the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance's (DCAMM's) 2023 *Report on the Real Property Owned and Leased by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.* The data from the report comes from the Commonwealth Asset Management Information System, which is a service that collects property information from state agencies and municipal assessing offices.

DLM conducted data validation to remove duplicate entries and ensure accuracy. For this analysis, DLM was limited to data collected by DOR and DCAMM. Since DCAMM cannot fully validate external data from other state agencies and authorities, DLM omitted land under the control of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, the MBTA, and Massport (except for the Hanscom Air Force Base). DLM's list of other Commonwealth land holdings includes watershed land, which receives PILOT reimbursements under a separate state program.

Classification of State-Owned Land

By using the data provided by the Division of Local Services and DCAMM, DLM classified land under the various categories listed below and grouped state agencies together according to their function:

- Correctional Institutions and Detention Centers: Department of Correction, Department of Youth Services, Massachusetts Correctional Institute
- Forests: Department of Conservation and Recreation
- Miscellaneous Mental Health Facilities: Department of Mental Health, Department of Developmental Services
- Military Campgrounds and Veterans' Homes: Military Division of the Commonwealth, Veterans' Homes
- Other Conservation and Recreation Land: Department of Conservation and Recreation, Department of Fish and Game, Office of Fishing and Boating Access
- **Other Land:** Massport (Hanscom Air Force Base), Massachusetts State Police, Lawrence Experiment Station
- Parks: Department of Conservation and Recreation
- Reservations: Department of Conservation and Recreation
- State Hospitals: Department of Mental Health, Department of Public Health
- State Universities and Community Colleges: Department of Education
- University of Massachusetts Facilities: Department of Education
- Wildlife Management Areas: Department of Fish and Game

For the purposes of this report, DLM defines *protected land* as state-owned land that is primarily used for conservation and/or recreation and has significant limitations on development. The following state-owned land classifications represent protected land: Forests, Parks, Reservations, Wildlife Management Areas, and Other Conservation and Recreation Land.

PILOT Reimbursements per Acre

DLM calculated reimbursement rates for each municipality by the following formula and rounded to the nearest dollar:

FY 2024 PILOT reimbursement ÷ number of state-owned land acres = PILOT reimbursement per acre

State-Owned Land as a Percentage of Total Land Area

For each city and town, DLM divided the municipality's state-owned land acreage by the municipality's total land area (in acres), using acreage statistics from MassGIS.

Conservation and Recreation Floor Proposals

DLM calculated the range of the proposed conservation and recreation floor (\$50– \$125) by looking at PILOT reimbursement rates per acre from municipalities between the 20th and 50th percentiles. For this recommendation, DLM classifies disproportionately low reimbursement rates as rates that fall below the state median (\$127 per acre as of FY 2024). Conservation and recreation land was identified from DLM's internal classification of protected state-owned land from the following categories: Forests, Parks, Reservations, Wildlife Management Areas, and Other Conservation and Recreation.

DLM calculated the proposals using the following formula:

(funding floor per acre – municipality's PILOT per acre) x municipality's acreage of protected conservation and recreation land = conservation and recreation supplemental funding

Municipalities' PILOT reimbursements per acre are very precise. For maximum accuracy, DLM internally rounded municipalities' PILOT per acre to the nearest penny (ex. \$12.25 instead of \$12) to determine specific amounts needed for supplemental funding. The examples presented in the report are rounded to the nearest dollar for ease of explanation.

PILOT Equivalent Change Funding Proposal

DLM calculated estimates for recommended funding to the PILOT program that are equivalent to the average percentage change in state-owned land values in a given fiscal year. This was done by multiplying the average percentage change in state-owned land values in the Commonwealth by the previous fiscal year's appropriation. The following formula illustrates these equivalent change funding estimates for FY 2024.

FY 2024 average % change in state-owned land value x FY 2023 PILOT appropriation = FY 2024 equivalent change funding

Hold-Harmless Proposal

The actual FY 2024 state appropriation to the PILOT program was \$51.5 million. Under DLM's proposal, hold-harmless would be triggered in a municipality if the *hypothetical* FY 2024 PILOT reimbursement received by a municipality were less than the municipality's actual FY 2023 PILOT reimbursement, using an FY 2024 state appropriation equivalent to the actual FY 2023 state appropriation of \$45 million.

If a municipality's hypothetical FY 2024 PILOT reimbursement would have been lower than its actual FY 2023 PILOT reimbursement, the following formula would be used to determine the hold-harmless amount:

FY 2023 actual PILOT reimbursement – FY 2024 hypothetical PILOT reimbursement = hold-harmless amount

Other General Calculations

DLM rounded percentages, decimals, and accounting calculations to the nearest percent, number, and dollar, respectively, for ease of explanation.

APPENDIX C—STATUTES PERTAINING TO STATE-OWNED LAND

M.G.L. c. 58, § 13 (as amended by St. 2023, c. 28, § 27): Definitions applicable to Secs. 13 to 17

As used in this section and sections 14 through 17, inclusive, the following words shall have the following meanings:

"Base year valuation", for each city and town, the valuation of state-owned land within the city or town as of January 1, 2017 as determined by the commissioner under this section.

"Base year per-acre land valuation", for each city and town, the valuation per-acre of state-owned land as determined by the commissioner during the base year valuation of state-owned land under this section.

"Fair cash valuation", for each city and town, the valuation of state-owned land located in the city or town as of January 1 and used to determine the reimbursement in lieu of taxes under section 17 for the fiscal year that begins the July 1 of the following year. The fair cash valuation as of January 1, 2019 shall equal the base year valuation, adjusted by the percentage, if any, by which such valuation has changed, as determined by the commissioner from the biennial equalized valuation reported for the city and town under sections 10 through 10C, inclusive, for January 1, 2018, plus the fair cash valuation of state owned land acquisitions and minus the fair cash valuation of state-owned land dispositions since the base year valuation. The fair cash valuation of any state-owned land acquisitions and dispositions within the city or town shall equal the product of the per-acre land valuation for the city or town times the number of acres of such state-owned land. Thereafter, the fair cash valuation as of any January 1 shall equal the fair cash valuation for the preceding January 1, adjusted in the year for which the commissioner is to establish a valuation under section 14 by the percentage, if any, by which such valuation has changed, as determined by the commissioner from the biennial equalized valuation for the preceding January 1, plus the fair cash valuation of state owned land acquisitions and minus the fair cash valuation of state-owned land dispositions during the preceding calendar year.

Per-acre land valuation", for each city and town, the per acre land valuation used to determine the fair cash valuation of state-owned land acquisitions and dispositions during any calendar year.

The valuation as of January 1, 2019 shall equal the base year per acre land valuation, adjusted by the percentage, if any, by which such valuation has changed, as determined by the commissioner from the biennial equalized valuation reported for such city and town under sections 10 to 10C, inclusive, for January 1, 2018. Thereafter, the valuation shall equal the per acre land valuation last established, adjusted by the percentage, if any, by which such valuation has changed, as determined by the commissioner from the biennial equalized valuation for the January 1 preceding the year for which the commissioner is to establish a valuation under section 14. The valuation shall be used to determine the fair cash valuation of state-owned land acquisitions and dispositions for the year in which the commissioner makes such per-acre land valuation and the succeeding year, and until another such valuation is made.

"Reimbursement percentage", for each city and town, the fair cash valuation percentage share of the annual appropriation made for reimbursements in lieu of taxes on state-owned land. The percentage shall be the fair cash valuation of the state-owned land within the city or town as of January 1 divided by the total fair cash valuation of all state-owned land as of January 1.

"State-owned land" all land owned by the commonwealth as of January 1 and used for the purposes of a fish hatchery, game preserve or wild life sanctuary, a state military camp ground, a state-operated veterans' home, a state forest, the University of Massachusetts, or a public institution under the department of correction, the department of higher education, the department of mental health, the department of developmental services, the department of public health, the department of transitional assistance, or the department of youth services, land owned by the commonwealth known as the Wachusett Mountain State Reservation and the Mount Greylock State Reservation, Blue Hills Reservation, and the Middlesex Fells Reservation and of all land owned by the commonwealth and under the care and control of the department of conservation and recreation and used for recreational or conservation purposes, except land which at the time of the establishment of the department was held by the former Metropolitan District Commission; and of all land held by the department of environmental protection for use as a solid waste disposal facility under sections 18 through 24, inclusive, of chapter 16; of all land comprising the north shore regional 911 center and the Essex county correctional facility in the town of Middleton and of any land acquired by the low-level radioactive waste management board pursuant to paragraph (g) of section 23 of chapter 111H. "Stateowned land" shall not include (1) buildings, structures, improvements or other things erected thereon or affixed thereto, or (2) land which at the time of its acquisition by the commonwealth was exempt from local taxation, except land under the care and control of the department of fish and game and used as a game preserve or wildlife sanctuary and which was at the time of its acquisition by the commonwealth under the care and control of the federal government.

M.G.L. c. 58, § 14: Determination of fair cash valuation of state-owned land located within municipalities; land held by division of watershed management

In 2019 and every 2 years thereafter, the commissioner, on or before June 1, shall determine the fair cash valuation of state-owned land located within each city or town under section 13. To assist in making the determination the commissioner may require oral or written information from any officer or agent of the commonwealth or of any city or town therein and from any other inhabitant thereof, and may require such information to be on oath. Such officers, agents and persons, so far as able, shall furnish the commissioner with the required information in such form as the commissioner may indicate, within 15 days after being so requested by the commissioner.

With respect to land held by the division of watershed management in the department of conservation and recreation for the purposes named in section 5G of chapter 59, the commissioner shall, by June 1, also determine the fair cash valuation of such land in each city or town by the same method as provided in section 13 for determining the fair cash valuation of state-owned land and notify the division of the valuations.

M.G.L. c. 58, § 15: Notification of land acquired or disposed of by commonwealth

Whenever the commonwealth acquires or disposes of land, the commissioner of the division of capital assets management shall notify the commissioner. The commissioner shall determine whether the acquisition or disposition is state-owned land as defined in section 13. Land so determined by March 1 shall be included in or removed from the annual statement of fair cash valuation and reimbursement percentages made by the commissioner under section 16.

M.G.L. c. 58, § 16: Statement of fair cash valuation reimbursement percentage for each municipality where state-owned land located

The commissioner shall annually deliver, to the state treasurer, a statement of the fair cash valuation reimbursement percentage for each city and town in which stateowned land is located, and of the amount of money to be paid to each such city and town as determined by the following section.

M.G.L. c. 58, § 17: Reimbursement of municipalities where state-owned land located

The treasurer shall annually, reimburse each city and town in which state-owned land is located, an amount in lieu of taxes upon the reimbursement percentages reported to the treasurer by the commissioner under the preceding section, determined by multiplying the percentages by the amount appropriated for such purposes for the fiscal year. No reimbursements hereunder on account of lands owned by the commonwealth and under the care and control of the department of conservation and recreation and used for recreational or conservation purposes shall be made from the Inland Fisheries and Game Fund.

APPENDIX D — STATE-OWNED LAND ELIGIBLE FOR PILOT, BY MUNICIPALITY

Municipality	State-Owned Land as of FY 2024
Abington	Ames Nowell State Park
Acton	ICFMR, Massachusetts Correctional Institution Concord
Acushnet	Observation Tower
Adams	Mount Greylock State Reservation, Savoy Mountain State Forest
Agawam	Robinson State Park
Amherst	Five Colleges Bike Path, Mount Holyoke Range State Park, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Andover	Choice Housing, Harold Parker State Forest
Aquinnah	Gay Head NGMA
Ashburnham	Ashburnham State Forest, Ashby WMA, High Ridge WMA, Watatic Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary
Ashby	Ashby WMA, Bennett WMA, Globe Fish & Game, Scripture Hill WMA, Souhegan River WMA, Souhegan River Access, Trapfall Brook Corridor WMA, Upper Wrights Pond, Watatic Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary, Watatic Mountain WMA, Willard Brook State Forest
Ashfield	Swift River WMA, Ashfield/Hawley WMA, DAR State Forest, Poland Brook WMA
Ashland	Ashland State Park, Hopkinton State Park
Athol	Millers River WMA, North Quabbin Focus Area, Petersham State Forest, Roger Lawton State Forest, Tully Brook
Ayer	Ayer Game Farm
Barnstable	Barnstable State Forest, Bearses Pond, Observation Tower, Independence Park NGMA, Shubael Pond Access
Barre	Hawes Hill, Moose Brook WMA, Phillipston WMA, Prince River WMA, Quabbin Reservoir Watershed, Raccoon Hill WMA, Spencer State Forest, Ware River Corridor/WMA
Becket	Becket State Forest, Becket WMA, October Mountain State Forest, Westfield River Access, Williams Project
Bedford	Bedford/Hanscom Airport

Municipality	State-Owned Land as of FY 2024
Belchertown	Bachelor Brook Wildlife Conservation Easement, Bachelor Brook WMA, Herman Covey WMA, Mount Holyoke Range State Park, Red Bridge State Park, Swift River WMA, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Bellingham	Franklin Branch Rail Trail
Berkley	Berkley State Forest, Dighton Rock State Park
Bernardston	Crossroad WMA, Satan's Kingdom WMA
Billerica	Billerica State Forest, Concord River Street Access, Manning State Forest
Blackstone	Blackstone River Corridor, Douglas/Franklin Rail Trail, Quissett Hill WMA
Blandford	Tolland/Chester/Blandford State Forest
Bolton	Bolton Flats WMA
Boston	Boston Harbor Islands, Department of Corrections Pre-Release Center, Judge Connelly Youth Center, Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Massachusetts Mental Health Clinic Fenwood, Roxbury Community College, University of Massachusetts Boston
Bourne	Bournedale Road, Camp Edwards, Crane WMA, Massachusetts Maritime Academy, Sandy Pond Road
Boxborough	Boxboro Station, Depot Road Conservation Land
Boxford	Baldpate Pond State Park, Boxford State Forest, Boxford Wildlife Sanctuary, Georgetown/Rowley State Forest, J.C. Phillips Wildlife Sanctuary, Willowdale State Forest
Braintree	Blue Hills State Reservation
Brewster	Brewster Beach, Habitat-Rare/Endangered, Nickerson State Forest, Nickerson State Park, Sheep Pond Access
Bridgewater	Taunton River WMA, Bridgewater State University, Bridgewater State Forest, Hockomock Swamp WMA, Lake Nippenicket Access, Massachusetts Correctional Institution Bridgewater
Brimfield	Brimfield State Forest
Brockton	Ames Nowell State Park
Brookfield	Brookfield Rail Trail, Quaboag Pond Access, Quaboag WMA, Richardson WMA, Salmon Brook WMA, Wolf Swamp WMA

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Municipality	State-Owned Land as of FY 2024
Buckland	Buckland State Forest, Hawley State Forest
Canton	Blue Hills State Reservation, ICFMR, Massachusetts Hospital School, Neponset River Park Reservation
Carlisle	Great Brook Farm State Forest
Carver	Atwood Reservoir WMA, Muddy Pond, Myles Standish State Forest
Charlemont	Catamount State Forest, Deerfield River Access, Mohawk Trail State Forest
Charlton	Bennett WMA, Observation Tower
Chelmsford	Great Brook Farm State Park, Manning State Forest
Chelsea	Veterans' Home
Cheshire	Chalet WMA, Ashuwillticook Rail Trail, Mount Greylock State Reservation, Savoy WMA, Stafford Hill WMA
Chester	Chester State Forest/Observation Tower, Chester WMA, Chester-Blandford State Forest, Fox Den WMA, Hiram Fox WMA, John J. Kelly WMA, Westfield River Access
Chesterfield	Brewer Brook WMA, Ram Hill WMA, Tower Brook WMA, Canada Hill WMA, Chester WMA, Chesterfield State Forest, Dead Branch State Forest, Fisk Meadow WMA, Gill Bliss State Forest, Hiram Fox WMA, Ireland St. Site, Krug Sugarbush State Forest, Westfield River Access
Clarksburg	Clarksburg State Forest, Florida State Forest, Mauerts State Park, Natural Bridge State Park
Clinton	Moss Pond Access Area, NEDVED Project
Colrain	Catamount State Park, Catamount WMA, Drew Farm, Green River Access, Green River WMA, H. O. Cook State Forest
Concord	Bedford/Hanscom Airport, Massachusetts Correctional Institution Concord, Pantry Brook, Walden Pond State Reservation
Conway	Flagg Mountain WMA, Conway State Forest, Poland Brook WMA, South River State Forest
Cummington	Meadow Brook WMA, Bryant Mount, Chester WMA, Chesterfield State Park, Cummington WMA, Deer Hill State Reservation, East Branch State Forest, Fox Den WMA, Hinsdale Flats WMA, New WMA, Powell Brook WMA, Swift River WMA, Westfield River Access
Dalton	Appalachian Trail, Chalet WMA, Day Mountain WMA, Division of Fisheries and Wildlife—Western Region Headquarters, Housatonic River WMA, Wahconah Falls State Park

Municipality	State-Owned Land as of FY 2024
Danvers	Hogan Regional Center, North Shore Community College
Dartmouth	Acushnet Cedar Swamp, Acushnet Sawmill WMA, Demarest Lloyd State Park, New WMA, Noquochoke NGMA, Southeastern Massachusetts Bioreserve, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth
Deerfield	Connecticut River Greenway State Park, Deerfield River Access, Franklin County Bikeway, Mount Sugarloaf State Reservation, Pocumtuck Ridge Trail State Park, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Whately Great Swamp WMA
Dennis	Observation Tower
Dighton	Sweets Knoll State Park
Douglas	Douglas State Forest, Mine Brook WMA
Dover	Charles River Reservation
Dracut	Lowell-Dracut-Tyngsborough State Forest, Mascuppic Lake Waterfront
Dunstable	Dunstable Brook WMA, Unkety Brook WMA, Blue Heron Rookery, Hauk Swamp NGMA, Larter Lot, Nashua River Public Access
Duxbury	Myles Standish State Forest
East Bridgewater	Poor Meadow Brook WMA, Robins Pond Public Access
East Brookfield	Hitchcock Mountain WMA, Podunk Marsh, Quaboag WMA
Eastham	Mary Chase Salt Marsh
Easthampton	Manhan River Access, Mount Tom State Reservation
Easton	Borderland State Park, Hockomock Swamp WMA
Edgartown	Chappaquiddick Beach, Edgartown Beach State Forest, Katama Plains National Heritage Area, Manuel F. Correllus State Forest, Martha's Vineyard State Forest, South Beach State Park
Egremont	Green River WMA, Jug End Fen National Heritage Area, Jug End Fen WMA, Jug End State Reservation/WMA, Mount Everett State Reservation, Prospect Lake Public Access
Erving	Connecticut River Greenway State Park, Millers River Access, Warwick/Erving State Forest
Essex	Broad Marsh, Observation Tower

Municipality	State-Owned Land as of FY 2024
Fairhaven	Fort Phoenix Beach State Reservation, Nasketucket Bay State Reservation, Shaw's Cove, South Shore Salt Marsh, West Island
Fall River	Acushnet Sawmill WMA, Cook's Pond Public Access, Corrigan Mental Health Center, Freetown State Forest, Southeastern Massachusetts Bioreserve, Taunton River Access
Falmouth	Crane Pond WMA, Camp Edwards, Childs River Access, Choice Housing, Crocker Pond Access, Falmouth State Forest/Observation Tower, Moonakis River Access, Waquoit Bay Estuarine Reserve, Washburn Island
Fitchburg	Fitchburg State University, Leominster State Forest, Scripture Hill WMA
Florida	Florida State Forest, Mohawk Trail State Forest, Savoy Mountain State Forest
Foxborough	F. Gilbert Hills State Forest
Framingham	Callahan State Park, Cochituate State Park, Framingham State University, Massachusetts Correctional Institution Framingham
Franklin	Franklin State Forest, Franklin-Douglas Rail Trail
Freetown	Acushnet Sawmill WMA, Freetown State Forest, Freetown Swamp WMA, Long Pond Access, Mill Bogs WMA
Gardner	Gardner Heritage State Park, High Ridge WMA, ICFMR, Massachusetts Correctional Institution Gardner, Westminster State Forest
Georgetown	Upper Parker River WMA, Baldpate Pond State Park, Crane Pond WMA, Georgetown/Rowley State Forest, ICFMR, Rock Pond Access, Upper Parker River WMA
Gill	Barton Cove, Connecticut River Access, Connecticut River Greenway State Park, French King Gorge
Gloucester	University of Massachusetts Amherst (Hodgkins Cove)
Goshen	DAR State Forest, Lily Pond WMA, New Goshen WMA
Gosnold	Penikese Island WMA
Grafton	ICFMR, Martha Deering WMA, Quinsigamond River Corridor WMA
Granby	Facing Rock WMA, Mount Holyoke Range State Park
Granville	Granville State Forest

Municipality	State-Owned Land as of FY 2024
Great Barrington	Agawam Lake WMA, Appalachian Trail, Beartown State Forest, East Mountain State Forest, Fountain Pond State Park, Great Barrington State Forest, Housatonic River WMA, University of Massachusetts Amherst —W.E.B. Du Bois Center
Greenfield	Connecticut River Greenway State Park, Deerfield River Access, Green River Access Area, Greenfield Mental Health Center, Rocky Mount Park
Groton	Unkety Brook WMA, Ayer Game Farm, Baddacook Boat Ramp, Bertozzi/Squannacook WMA, Observation Tower, Hollis Branch Railroad, J. Harry Rich State Forest, Lost Lake Boat Ramp, Squannacook River WMA
Groveland	Upper Parker River WMA, Crane Pond WMA
Hadley	Connecticut River Greenway State Park, Joseph Allen Skinner State Park, Mill River Access, Mount Holyoke Range State Park, Norwottuck Rail Trail, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Halifax	Burrage Pond WMA, Peterson Swamp WMA, Taunton River Public Access, Taunton River WMA, West Monponsett Pond Access
Hamilton	Bradley Palmer State Park, Chebacco Lake Boat Ramp
Hancock	Misery Mountain WMA, Forbush Wildlife Sanctuary, Goodrich Memorial Forest, Hancock WMA, Pittsfield State Forest, Taconic Mountain WMA
Hanover	Indian Head River Access
Hanson	Burrage Pond WMA, Observation Tower
Hardwick	Lower Road, Moose Brook WMA, Muddy Brook WMA, Raccoon Hill WMA
Harvard	Bear Hill Pond Access, Bolton Flats WMA, Observation Tower
Harwich	Cape Cod Rail Trail, Hawks Nest Pond State Forest, Oliver's Pond
Hatfield	Bashan Park, Connecticut River Access, Great Swamp WMA, Mill River WMA
Haverhill	Choice Housing
Hawley	Ashfield/Hawley WMA, Dubuque Memorial State Forest, Hawks Brook WMA, Hawley National Heritage Area, Hawley State Forest, Mohawk Trail State Forest
Heath	H. O. Cook State Forest
Hingham	Back River

Municipality	State-Owned Land as of FY 2024
Hinsdale	Hinsdale Flats WMA, Tracy Pond WMA, Ashmere Lake State Park, Wahconah Falls State Park
Holden	Mason Road, Poutwater Pond WMA, Quinapoxet River Access, Still Water River Corridor, Wachusett Watershed
Holland	Leadmine WMA
Holliston	Winthrop Lake Boat Landing
Holyoke	Broad Brook WMA, East Mountain WMA, Holyoke Community College, Holyoke Heritage State Park, Holyoke NGHA, Mount Tom State Reservation, Mount Tom WMA, Veterans' Home
Hopedale	Upton State Forest
Hopkinton	Hopkinton State Park, North Pond Boat Ramp, Upton State Forest, Whitehall State Park
Hubbardston	Hubbardston State Forest, Moose Horn Pond Boat Ramp, Natty Brook Access, Ware River Watershed, Westminster State Forest
Hudson	Sudbury State Forest
Hull	Boston Harbor Islands, Weir River Estuary
Huntington	C. M. Gardner State Park, Hiram Fox WMA, Huntington State Forest
Ipswich	Bradley Palmer State Park, Great Marsh North WMA, North Shore Marsh WMA, Plum Island State Park, Salt Marsh Nature Preserve, Willowdale State Forest
Kingston	Jones River Public Access, Kingston State Forest
Lakeville	Massasoit State Park, Taunton State Hospital
Lancaster	Bolton Flats WMA, Fitchburg State University Nature Area, Fort Pond Access, ICFMR, Lancaster State Forest, Massachusetts Correctional Institution Shirley
Lanesborough	Chalet WMA, Mount Greylock State Reservation, New WMA, Pittsfield State Forest
Lawrence	Lawrence Experiment Station, Lawrence Heritage State Park
Lee	Beartown State Forest, Hop Brook WMA, Housatonic River WMA, Laurel Lake Boat Ramp, October Mount State Forest
Leicester	Moose Hill WMA
Lenox	Housatonic River WMA, October Mountain State Forest, October Mountain Observation Tower

Municipality	State-Owned Land as of FY 2024
Leominster	Leominster State Forest, Nashua River Watershed, Whalom Lake Boat Access
Leverett	Brushy Mountain WMA, Brushy Mount Wildlife Conservation Easement, Montague WMA, Mount Toby Highlands National Heritage Area, Mount Toby State Reservation, Mount Toby WMA, UMASS Forest Land
Leyden	Leyden State Forest, Leyden WMA, New WMA, Shattuck Brook WMA
Lincoln	Bedford/Hanscom Airport, Walden Pond State Reservation
Littleton	Boxboro Station, Depot Road Conservation Land
Lowell	Lowell Heritage Park, Lowell/Dracut/Tyngsborough State Forest, Middlesex Community College, University of Massachusetts Lowell
Ludlow	Facing Rock WMA, Ludlow State Forest, Red Bridge State Park
Lunenburg	Mulpus Brook WMA, Willard Brook State Forest
Lynn	Choice Housing
Lynnfield	Camp Curtis Guild
Marion	Acushnet WMA, Haskell Swamp WMA
Marlborough	Callahan State Park, Marlborough State Forest
Marshfield	English Salt Marsh, North River WMA
Mashpee	Bufflehead Bay, John's Pond Access, Mashpee Pine Barrens WMA, Mashpee River Corridor, Mashpee and Wakeby Pond Access, Popponesset Island, Quashnet River Access Area, South Cape Beach State Park, Steeplechase
Mattapoisett	Acushnet WMA, Brandt Island RD, Cedar Swamp, Haskell Swamp WMA, Nasketucket Bay State Reservation, RAM Island B Sanctuary
Medfield	Medfield Charles River Reservation, Medfield State Hospital
Medford	Middlesex Fells Reservation
Melrose	Middlesex Fells Reservation
Mendon	E. Kent Swift WMA, Quissett Hill WMA
Merrimac	Lake Attitash

Municipality	State-Owned Land as of FY 2024
Middleborough	Taunton River WMA, Black Brook WMA, Fort Hill State Park, McNeil Lot WMA, Nemasket River Stream Access MA, New WMA, Rocky Gutter WMA, Sippican Headquarters WMA, Taunton River Access, Taunton River State Park, Taunton State Hospital, Tispaquin Pond Access
Middlefield	Fox Den WMA, Hiram Fox WMA, Middlefield State Forest, Peru State Forest, Walnut Hill WMA
Middleton	Boxford State Forest, Harold Parker State Forest, NFI Shelter Care
Millbury	Martha Deering WMA, Merrill Pond WMA, Singletary Boat Ramp
Millville	Blackstone River Heritage State Park, Worcester County Rail Trail
Milton	Blue Hills State Reservation, Neponset River Park Reservation
Monroe	Monroe State Forest
Monson	Brimfield State Forest, Monson Development Center
Montague	Montague Plains WMA, Montague WMA, Bitzer State Fish Hatchery, Connecticut River Scenic Corridor, Montague State Forest, Mount Toby State Reservation, Sawmill River WMA, Spaulding Brook
Monterey	Beartown State Forest, Lake Buel Access
Montgomery	Huntington State Forest, Tekoa Mountain WMA, New WMA, Robinson Wildlife Sanctuary
Mount Washington	Appalachian Trail, Mount Everett State Reservation, Mount Washington State Forest
Nahant	Henry Cabot Lodge Sanctuary
Nantucket	Fairgrounds House, Head of the Plains National Heritage Area, Nantucket State Forest
Natick	Cochituate State Park, State Armory
New Ashford	Mount Greylock State Reservation
New Bedford	Acushnet Cedar Swamp
New Braintree	Oakham WMA, State Police Academy, Sucker Brook WMA, Wine Road, Winnimussett WMA
New Marlborough	Campbell Falls State Forest, Konkapot River Access, Sandisfield State
	Forest

Municipality	State-Owned Land as of FY 2024
Newbury	William Forward WMA, Crane Pond Falls, Martin Burns WMA, Parker River WMA/Martin Burns WMA
Newburyport	Maudslay State Park
Norfolk	Bristol Blake State Reservation, Massachusetts Correctional Institution State Prison, Wrentham State School
North Adams	Appalachian Trail, Clarksburg State Forest, Hoosic River Access, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Mohawk Trail State Forest, Mount Greylock State Reservation, Natural Bridge State Park, North Adams State College, Savoy Mount State Forest
North Andover	Boxford State Forest, Bureau of Solid Waste, Harold Parker State Forest
North Brookfield	Five Mile River Access, Five Mile River WMA, Richardson WMA, Spencer State Forest, Stumpf Project
North Reading	Camp Curtis Guild, Harold Parker State Forest, Limited Group Residence
Northampton	Connecticut River Greenway State Park, Elwell State Park, Five Colleges Trail, Northampton State Hospital/DFA, Pomeroy Terrace, Shepherd's Island
Northborough	Field Trail Area, Westborough State Hospital
Northbridge	Blackstone River Heritage Park, E Kent Swift WMA, Upton State Forest
Northfield	Connecticut River Greenway State Park, Northfield State Forest, Northfield/Warwick State Forest, Pauchaug Brook WMA, Satan's Kingdom WMA
Norton	Hockomock Swamp WMA, Paul A. Dever State School
Norwell	Observation Tower
Oak Bluffs	Oak Bluffs State Beach, Wareham Mental Health Center
Oakham	Oakham State Forest, Oakham WMA, Spencer State Forest
Orange	Fish Brook WMA, Lake Rohunta Public Access, Millers River WMA, New WMA, North Quabbin Focus Area, Orange State Park, Orange WMA, Orange/Warwick State Forest, Packard Pond Public Access, Tully Brook WMA, Tully Mountain WMA, Warwick WMA
Orleans	Baker Pond Access, Namskaket Sea Path/Nickerson State Park

Municipality	State-Owned Land as of FY 2024
Otis	Farmington River WMA, Farmington River Public Access, Farmington River WMA, Long Meadow WMA, Long Mountain WMA, Otis State Forest, Otis WMA, Shaw Pond Public Access, Tolland State Forest
Oxford	Douglas State Forest, Merrill Pond State Reservation, Merrill Pond WMA
Palmer	Bergeron Tree Farm, Bitzer State Fish Hatchery, Forest Lake Access, Palmer WMA, Quaboag River WMA, Red Bridge State Park, Reed F Hatchery
Paxton	Moose Hill WMA, Moore State Park
Peabody	Solid Waste Disposal
Pelham	University of Massachusetts Amherst
Pepperell	Ayer/Dunstable Bike Trail, Harry Rich State Forest, Nashua River Public Access, Nissitissit River WMA, Squannacook River WMA, Townsend Hill WMA, Unkety Brook WMA
Peru	Tracy Pond WMA, Middlefield State Forest, Peru State Forest, Peru WMA
Petersham	Phillipston WMA, Fish & Wildlife Land, Petersham State Forest, Phillipston WMA, Phillipston/Popple Camp WMA, Prince River WMA, Quabbin Reservoir Watershed
Phillipston	Burnshirt RD, Hubbardston State Forest, Millers River WMA, Phillipston WMA, Phillipston/Popple Camp WMA, Popple Camp WMA, Walter Fernald State School
Pittsfield	Berkshire Mental Health Center - Group Residence, Chalet WMA, Division of Fisheries and Wildlife Western Region Headquarters, Housatonic Valley WMA, October Mountain State Forest, Pittsfield State Forest
Plainfield	Swift River WMA, Deer Hill State Reservation, Hawley State Forest, Kenneth Dubuque State Forest, Meadow Brook WMA, Savoy State Forest, Westfield River Access
Plainville	Solid Waste Disposal, Wrentham State Forest
Plymouth	Ellisville Harbor, Grassy Pond, Halfway Pond WMA, Harlow Cooks Pond NGMA, Long Pond Access, Massachusetts Maritime Academy, Myles Standish State Forest, Plymouth County House OF Correction, Red Brook WMA, Sandy Pond Access, Sly Pond Habitat, South Triangle Pond Access, Southeast Pine Barrens WMA

Municipality	State-Owned Land as of FY 2024
Princeton	Leominster State Forest, Minns Wildlife Sanctuary, Wachusett Mountain State Forest, Mount Wachusett Mountain State Reservation, Savage Hill WMA, University of Massachusetts State Forest, Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Sanctuary, Wachusett Watershed
Provincetown	Clapps Pond Access
Quincy	Blue Hills State Reservation, Quincy Mental Health Center, Raccoon Island
Randolph	Blue Hills State Reservation
Raynham	Hockomock Swamp WMA, Raynham State Forest—Locust Street, Taunton River Access
Reading	Camp Curtis Guild
Rehoboth	Long Hill Observation Tower, Rehoboth State Forest
Revere	Rumney Marsh
Richmond	Fairfield Brook National Heritage Area, Richmond Pond Public Access, Richmond State Forest, Richmond WMA
Rochester	Acushnet WMA, Bog Lands, Gull Island, Haskell Swamp WMA, McHenry Lot, Snipatuit Pond Boat Launch
Rockport	Halibut Point State Park, Milk Island Sanctuary
Rowe	Maxwell Brook WMA, Rowe National Heritage Site, Rowe State Park
Rowley	Georgetown/Rowley State Forest, Mill Creek WMA, Parker River WMA, Prospect Hill State Forest, William Forward WMA, Willowdale State Forest
Royalston	Birch Hill WMA, Fish Brook WMA, Lawrence Brook WMA, Millers River WMA, Otter River State Forest, Royalston State Forest, Tully Mountain WMA, Warwick State Forest
Russell	New WMA, Tekoa Mountain WMA
Rutland	Barre Falls WMA, Oakham State Forest, Rutland State Forest, Savage Hill WMA, Ware River Boat Ramp, Ware River Watershed
Salem	Salem State University
Salisbury	Salisbury Salt Marsh WMA, Barberries Marshland, Carr Island Sanctuary, Choice Housing, Eagle Island/Merrimac River WMA, Ram Island Sanctuary, Salisbury Beach State Reservation, Various Salt Marsh Lots
Sandisfield	Otis State Forest

Municipality	State-Owned Land as of FY 2024
Sandwich	Camp Edwards, Sandwich Fish Hatchery & Misc. Pond Lots, Scorton River Salt Marsh, Shawme Crowell State Forest, Various Named Lots
Saugus	Breakheart Reservation, Choice Housing, ICFMR, Rumney Marsh Reservation
Savoy	Savoy Mount/Mohawk Trail, Savoy Mountain State Forest, Savoy WMA
Scituate	English Salt Marsh
Sharon	Borderland State Park
Sheffield	Dolomite Ledges National Heritage Area, East Mountain & Mount Everett State Reservation, Hubbard Brook WMA, Jug End Fen National Heritage Area, Threemile Pond WMA
Shelburne	Shelburne State Forest, Wilcox Hollow State Park
Sherborn	Massachusetts Correctional Institution Framingham
Shirley	Mulpus Brook WMA, Squannacook River WMA, Massachusetts Correctional Institution Shirley, Nashua River
Shrewsbury	Flint Pond Access, GLAVIN Regional Center, Lake Quinsigamond Access
Shutesbury	Brushy Mountain WMA, Farrar Wood, Lake Wyola State Park, Shutesbury/New Salem State Forest, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Somerset	Brayton Point Marsh WMA
South Hadley	J. A. Skinner State Park, Mount Holyoke Range State Park
Southampton	Broad Brook WMA, Pequot Pond Access
Southborough	Callahan State Park, Hopkinton State Park
Southbridge	Breakneck Brook WMA, McKinstry Brook WMA
Southwick	Southwick WMA, Congamond Pond Access, Honey Pot NGWMA, Honey Pot National Heritage Area, Middle Pond Access
Spencer	Moose Hill WMA, Spencer State Forest
Springfield	Joseph P Gentile State School, Lake Lorraine State Park, Springfield Mental Health Center
Sterling	Leominster State Forest
Stockbridge	Agawam Lake WMA, Beartown State Forest, Kampoosa Bog
Stoneham	Middlesex Fells Reservation

Municipality	State-Owned Land as of FY 2024
Sturbridge	Big Alum Pond Boat Ramp, Big Alum Pond Island, Breakneck Brook WMA, Leadmine WMA, McKinstry Brook WMA, Wells State Park, Wolf Swamp WMA
Sudbury	Pantry Brook WMA, Sudbury River Access
Sunderland	Connecticut River Greenway State Park, Fish Hatchery, Green Swamp, Gunn Mount National Heritage Area, Montague WMA, Mount Toby State Forest, Mount Toby State Reservation, Mount Toby WMA, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Sutton	Lackey Pond WMA, Manchaug Pond Access, Merrill Pond WMA, Purgatory Chasm State Reservation, Sutton ST Fish Hatchery, Sutton State Forest
Swampscott	Choice Housing
Taunton	Hockomock Swamp WMA, Massasoit State Park, Sabbatia Lake Access, Taunton State Hospital
Templeton	Birch Hill WMA, North Worcester Rail Trail, Otter River State Forest, Phillipston WMA, Stone Bridge Road, Templeton State Forest, Water Fernald State School
Tewksbury	ICFMR, Tewksbury State Hospital
Tisbury	Martha's Vineyard State Forest
Tolland	Tolland/Granville State Forest
Topsfield	Bradley Palmer State Park, Ipswich River Access, Willowdale State Forest
Townsend	Bertozzi/Squannacook WMA, Hunting Hill WMA, Squannacook River State Park, Squannacook WMA, Townsend Hill WMA, Townsend State Forest, Willard Brook State Forest
Truro	High Head Coastal Access Area
Tyngsborough	Flint's Pond WMA, Great Blue Heron Rookery WMA, Landfill, Larter Lot, Lowell Dracut Tyngsborough State Forest
Tyringham	Beartown State Forest, Hop Brook WMA
Upton	Upton State Forest
Uxbridge	Blackstone River Heritage State Park, Capron Park, E. Kent Swift WMA, Lackey Pond WMA
Wakefield	Camp Curtis Guild
Wales	Brimfield State Forest, Mount PISGAH WMA

Municipality	State-Owned Land as of FY 2024
Walpole	Massachusetts Correctional Institution Cedar Junction
Waltham	University of Massachusetts Amherst
Ware	Coy Hill WMA, Coy Mountain WMA, Swift River WMA, Ware River WMA
Wareham	Agawam Mill Pond Access, Maple Springs WMA, Red Brook WMA, Spectacle Pond Public Access, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Wareham Mental Health Center
Warren	New Warren WMA, Quaboag WMA
Warwick	Moore's Pond Access, Mount Grace State Forest, Tully Brook WMA, Warwick State Forest, Warwick WMA, Warwick/Erving State Forest
Washington	Hinsdale Flats WMA, October Mountain State Forest
Wayland	Cochituate State Park
Webster	Douglas State Forest, Mine Brook WMA, Schwartz Site, Webster Lake Access
Wellfleet	Cape Cod Rail Trail, Observation Tower, Fox Island RESMA, Paine Campground
Wendell	Millers River Access, Millers River WMA, Quabbin Reservoir Watershed, Wendell State Forest, Wendell State Forest-Bear Mountain, Wendell WMA
Wenham	Choice Housing
West Bridgewater	Hockomock Swamp WMA, West Meadow WMA
West Brookfield	Coy Hill WMA, Coy Mountain WMA, Observation Tower, North Brookfield WMA, Quaboag River ACQ Project, Quaboag WMA, Richardson WMA, West Brookfield State Forest, Whortleberry Hill WMA
West Newbury	Crane Pond WMA, Merrimack River Boat Ramp, West Newbury WMA
West Springfield	Connecticut River WMA, East Mountain WMA
West Stockbridge	Crane Lake WMA, Maple Hill NGMA, Maple Hill WMA, Williams River WMA
West Tisbury	Observation Tower, Martha's Vineyard State Forest
Westborough	Hopkinton State Park, Westborough State Hospital, Westborough WMA

Municipality	State-Owned Land as of FY 2024
Westfield	Drake Mount Wildlife Sanctuary, East Mountain WMA, Grace Robinson W Sanctuary, Hampden County Detention Center, Hampton Ponds State Park, Honey Pot NGMA, ICFMR, Pequot Pond State Park, Robinson State Park, Westfield River Access WMA, Westfield State College, Westfield WMA, Western Massachusetts Hospital
Westford	Forge Pond Access, Long Sought Pond WMA
Westhampton	Brewer Brook WMA, Dead Branch State Forest, Huntington State Forest
Westminster	Gatehouse Road Westminster LLC, High Ridge WMA, Leominster State Forest, Massachusetts Correctional Institution Gardner, Wachusett Mountain State Reservation, Westminster State Forest
Westport	Horseneck Beach State Park, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth
Weymouth	Boston Harbor Islands, Webb State Park
Whately	Connecticut River Greenway State Park, Great Swamp WMA, Judson WMA, Mill River WMA, Mount Ester WMA, Poland Brook WMA, Whately Pond Fish and WMA, Whately WMA
Wilbraham	Red Bridge State Park
Williamsburg	Conway State Forest, Williamsburg WMA
Williamstown	Bullock Ledge National Heritage Area, Green River WMA, Misery Mountain WMA, Mount Greylock State Reservation, New Williamstown WMA, Taconic Crest Trail Corridor, Taconic Trail State Park
Winchendon	Birch Hill WMA, Lake Monomonac Access, Millers River WMA, Nineteenth Hill WMA, Otter River State Park, Winchendon Springs LPG, Winchendon State Forest
Winchester	Middlesex Fells Reservation
Windsor	Eugene D. Moran WMA, Chalet WMA, Eugene Moran WMA, Peru WMA, Powell Brook WMA, Savoy WMA, Stafford Hill WMA, Wahconah Falls State Park, Westfield River Access, Westfield River WMA, Windsor Pond Access, Windsor State Forest
Woburn	Woburn Community Residence
Worcester	Blackstone River Park, Quinsigamond State Park—Regatta Point, University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester County Detention Center, Worcester State University, Worcester State Hospital

Municipality	State-Owned Land as of FY 2024
Worthington	Canada Hill WMA, Fox Den WMA, Hiram Fox WMA, Peru WMA, Peru/Worthington State Forest, Tower Brook WMA
Wrentham	Foxborough State Forest, Franklin State Forest, Gilbert Hills State Forest, Wrentham State School, Wrentham State Forest
Yarmouth	Yarmouth NGMA
Woburn	Woburn Community Residence

APPENDIX E — ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR DIANA DIZOGLIO



State Auditor Diana DiZoglio serves as the chief accountability officer for Massachusetts state government and its residents.

The Office of the State Auditor conducts audits of state entities and contractors to assess their performance and recommend improvements to make government work better.

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