



MASSACHUSETTS FARM BUREAU FEDERATION, INC.

"The Voice of Agriculture"

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March 14, 2011

To: The Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture
From: The Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation
RE: Bills Related to Trapping – HB 1140, HB 1992, HB 2001, SB 330

Dear Committee Members:

The Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation is the largest farming organization in the Commonwealth with more than 6,000 members. We strongly support the passage of HB 1140, HB 2001, and SB 330/HB 1992.

Agricultural land is an important resource in Massachusetts. Aside from the obvious benefits of local food production, keeping land in agriculture protects it from development. This helps to protect open space, water quality, etc. It also helps to protect wildlife habitat. Many animals live and breed on land that is in agricultural production, or on undeveloped land that is associated with farms – field borders, hedgerows, undeveloped upland, etc. Farms also often link undeveloped parcels, offering safe passage for wildlife to travel from one area of habitat to another.

The close proximity of wildlife to agriculture makes wildlife management is a fact of life in agriculture. Farmers must protect livestock from predators, and disease that wild species may introduce onto a farm. Beavers can (and have) flooded fields, access roads and buildings. Muskrats undermine the banks of irrigation ditches and water resources on farms. Properly managing wildlife is an import component in managing a farm, and ensuring its viability

HB 1140, HB 2001 and SB 330/1992 offer important changes to Massachusetts law governing trapping and wildlife management. They allow for a better understanding of trends in wildlife populations and better document conflicts between people and wildlife. They also allow for more flexible and proactive approaches to wildlife management. Together, these bills would allow for a more scientific approach to wildlife management than is currently practiced in the Commonwealth. We urge you to pass these bills from Committee. The result will be improved wildlife management, and better wildlife conservation.

The Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation greatly appreciated the opportunity to comment on these regulations. Thank you for your consideration.

Contact

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