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## **Energy and Environmental Affairs**

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# **EEA Kicks Off 2012 Conservation Land Tax Credit Program**

BOSTON – Thursday, March 22, 2012 – Energy & Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Richard K. Sullivan today announced that applications for tax year 2012 are now being accepted for the EEA's Conservation Land Tax Credit Program. This new initiative, launched in 2011, offers refundable state income tax credits in exchange for conservation land donations.

“This program has been another key piece in the Patrick-Murray Administration's support of land conservation, which has protected nearly 95,000 acres since 2007,” said Secretary Sullivan. “This accomplishment is due to initiatives like this, which reward the generosity of private landowners and protect public open spaces across the state for the public to enjoy.”

In 2011, the program received 22 donations totaling 934 acres, with land valued at \$5.8 million. Tax credits in the amount of \$976,225 were distributed for land donations.

“I'm pleased to see this tax credit program continue as I believe it has a tremendously positive impact on the amount of preserved land in the Commonwealth,” said Sen. Marc R. Pacheco, Senate Chairman of the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture. “Not only does it enhance our states amount of preserved land for our citizens to enjoy but we do so in a way that is cost effective.”

Under EEA regulations, donated land must be protected in perpetuity by state, municipal or private conservation entities in order to qualify for a state income tax credit of one half of the appraised value, up to a maximum tax credit of \$50,000. By law, total funding for the program is capped at \$2 million for each tax year.

"I applaud the Patrick administration for offering this program," said Rep. Anne Gobi, House Chair of the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture. "There are many people who have been good stewards of their land and this tax credit is a way for that stewardship to continue."

EEA must certify all donations, which should have significant natural resources in the public interest and protect land in perpetuity. Types of land that may qualify as certified land include the following resources: drinking water supplies and water resource, critical

wildlife habitats that contribute to increased biological diversity, agricultural and forestry production, and recreational opportunities.

EEA evaluates applications to insure that the donations support regional and state long-term land conservation policies and plans and meet all other requirements in the program regulations. Once approved by EEA, applicants must submit the required form to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue to receive the tax credit. Applicants do not need to reside in Massachusetts and can make a land donation if they do not have Massachusetts taxable income.

When this program launched in 2011, Massachusetts became one of more than about a dozen states that offer state tax credits for the donation of approved conservation land. The Conservation Land Tax Credit Program is authorized by Chapter 509 of the Acts of 2009 as amended by Chapter 409 of the Act.