



Photo: Paula Champagne

Support a Massachusetts Outdoor Recreation Office

Overview

[*An Act Establishing the Office of Outdoor Recreation*](#),¹ S.560, led by Senator Hinds, would create a new office focused on outdoor recreation within the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) to support, promote and market outdoor recreational activities available throughout the state. The office would stimulate economic development and improve the quality of life, health, and well-being of residents and visitors to the Commonwealth. This legislation is sponsored by Senator Adam Hinds.

Outdoor Recreation In Massachusetts

Outdoor recreation is a significant driver of the Massachusetts economy, with \$10.5 billion annually in added value to the state's GDP, directly supporting 114,000 jobs, and \$5.5 billion in wages and salaries.² It's a factor in healthy living in both urban and rural communities, and new residents and businesses are attracted to places with high quality outdoor recreation.

Across the state, Massachusetts has a wealth of outdoor recreational opportunities in all seasons that go hand-in-hand with our Commonwealth's commitment to protecting and preserving natural resources and special places. Yet many residents and visitors do not know about the opportunities available to them nor the beautiful places they have yet to discover throughout our state.

What is the Outdoor Recreation bill?

Massachusetts would join 15 states around the country, including New Hampshire and Maine, in establishing a statewide Office of Outdoor Recreation to collaborate with stakeholders from the travel, tourism and health industries as well as business leaders, public officials and non-profits focused on economic development and conservation to promote and help improve outdoor recreation activities across the state and grow the Massachusetts recreation economy.

¹ <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/192/S560>

² U.S. Dep.t of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis 2019 report. See <https://outdoorindustry.org/state/massachusetts>

The new office would:

- Assist EEA and its departments and programs in developing and updating long-term plans, regional initiatives, and priorities for improving public access to outdoor recreational activities to benefit people of all ages, abilities, and socioeconomic levels.
- Collaborate with the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, Department of Public Health, and outdoor recreation and natural resource stakeholders to advance outdoor recreation opportunities, projects and programs.
- Establish the outdoor recreation economy as an asset to the long-term growth of the state and help grow this segment of the state's economy.
- Connect outdoor recreation programs to the general public, assist in developing outdoor recreation management strategies, and promote the health, social and economic benefits of outdoor recreation, with a focus on environmental justice populations.
- Report annually on the status of outdoor recreation in Massachusetts to assist in shaping future policies.
- Create an Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund to administer grants to bolster outdoor recreation.

ENDORISING ORGANIZATIONS

Adventure East
American Whitewater
Appalachian Mountain Club
Big City Mountaineers
Charles River Watershed Association
Connecticut River Conservancy
East Coast Greenway Alliance
Environmental League of Massachusetts
Friends of the Blue Hills
Friends of the Mystic to Charles
Kestrel Land Trust
L.L. Bean
Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust
Mass Audubon
Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition
Massachusetts Environmental Education Society
Mass Central Rail Trail Coalition
Massachusetts Conservation Voters

Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition
Mass Rivers Alliance
New Balance
New England Mountain Bike Association
Outdoor Afro
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
REI
Rising Tide Associates
Seven Hills Wheelmen
The Nature Conservancy
The Trustees of Reservations
Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area
Vibram
Western Massachusetts Climbers Coalition
WalkBike Springfield
Wareham Land Trust
Zoar Outdoor Adventure Resort

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