

HOUSE No. 3117

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Joseph F. Wagner

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to certain properties in the Commonwealth.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Joseph F. Wagner

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

8th Hampden

HOUSE No. 3117

By Mr. Wagner of Chicopee, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3117) of Joseph F. Wagner that the Secretary of the Department of Transportation be required to approve permits for certain construction on former railroad company land. Transportation.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Eighty-Ninth General Court
(2015-2016)**

An Act relative to certain properties in the Commonwealth.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 40 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2012 Official Edition,
2 is hereby amended by striking out section 54A and inserting in place thereof the following
3 section:-

4 If a city or town or any other person purchases any lands formerly owned in fee by a
5 railroad company and used as a railroad right-of-way or used in connection with the operation of
6 a railroad right of way, or any property formerly subject to an easement to a railroad company
7 and used as a railroad right-of-way or used in connection with the operation of a railroad right-
8 of-way, no permit to build a structure of any kind on land so purchased shall be issued by any
9 city or town in the commonwealth without first obtaining the consent in writing to the issuance
10 of a permit from the secretary of the Department of Transportation. The secretary may issue his
11 consent to the issuance of a permit only after holding a public hearing if the property has been
12 used by way of fee simple ownership or by easement by a railroad after January 1, 1960. For

13 property that was last used by a railroad prior to January 1, 1960 the secretary may issue his
14 consent to the issuance of a permit without the need to conduct a public hearing. No consent or
15 approval of the secretary shall be required for a building permit to build a structure on any
16 property outside of the bounds of any easement granted in favor of a railroad for construction
17 and or operation of railroad tracks and facilities used to deliver rail passengers or freight that is
18 not more than 3 miles in length.

19 If the secretary does not consent to the issuance of a permit, the owner of the land may
20 recover damages from the commonwealth in the amount that would be awarded under the
21 provisions of chapter 79 of the General Laws. Notwithstanding the last sentence of the previous
22 paragraph, there shall be no recovery of damages from the commonwealth by an owner of land
23 purchased after January 1, 1976.