

SENATE No. 369

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Nine

An Act establishing the Quaboag and Ware River Valley Heritage District Commission..

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. There is hereby established the Quaboag and Ware Rivers Valley Heritage
2 District, hereinafter referred to as the district, which shall include the towns of Barre,
3 Belchertown, Brimfield, Brookfield, East Brookfield, Hardwick, Monson, New Braintree, North
4 Brookfield, Palmer, Spencer, Ware, Warren and West Brookfield, to recognize the significant
5 historic, cultural and natural resources of the Quaboag and Ware Rivers Valley and to preserve
6 and interpret those resources for the education and inspiration of present and future generations.
7 Nothing herein shall be construed to limit the rights of private property owners or of municipal
8 or state governments to develop the lands, buildings, and resources in the manner they determine
9 appropriate. It is the purpose of this act to provide a management framework to assist the
10 commonwealth and the units of local government cited herein in the development and
11 implementation of integrated cultural, historical, land and water resource management programs
12 in cooperation with the federal government in order to retain, enhance and interpret the
13 significant values of the lands, water and structure in the district.

14 SECTION 2. There shall be a commission to be known as the Quaboag and Ware Rivers
15 Valley Heritage District Commission, hereinafter referred to as the commission. The
16 commission may: (i) coordinate activities of and establish cooperative agreements with federal,
17 state and local governments and private businesses and organizations in order to further historic
18 preservation, cultural conservation, natural area protection, tourism, and compatible
19 revitalization; (ii) establish guidelines and standards for projects and prepare programs and
20 exhibits, consistent with standards established by the National Park Service for preservation of
21 historic properties, including interpretive methods, to further recognition, preservation,
22 promotion, interpretation and economic revitalization of the historic and natural resources in the
23 district; (iii) provide advice and assistance in preparation of loan or grant applications to the
24 commission and applications for loans or grants from the federal or non-federal sources in
25 furtherance of the purposes of this act; (iv) make loans and grants, from funds appropriated,
26 donated or otherwise made available to the commission, for the purpose of conserving and
27 protecting sites, buildings, resources and objects which are included or eligible for inclusion on
28 the National Register of Historic Places or for the purpose of providing education and cultural
29 programs which encourage appreciation of the resources in the district; (v) prepare and
30 implement a study report which shall incorporate, in whole or in part, the plan prepared by the
31 Quaboag and Ware Rivers Valley Heritage District Commission and which shall present a
32 unified historic preservation and interpretive plan for the district. The report shall include an
33 analysis of the methods and means of identifying, preserving and interpreting the historical,
34 cultural and natural resources of the district along with recommendations concerning utilization
35 of those resources and coordination of activities within the district.

36 SECTION 3. The commission shall consist of the commissioner of conservation and
37 recreation or his designee, the chairman of the Massachusetts historical commission or his
38 designee, the executive director of the Massachusetts office of travel and tourism or his designee,
39 and 6 other persons to be appointed by the governor, 4 of whom shall be representatives of local
40 government from the communities within the district and 2 of whom shall be individuals who are
41 residents of the district to represent other interests as the governor deems appropriate. A vacancy
42 in the commission shall be filled in the manner in which the original appointment was made. The
43 members appointed by the governor shall serve for terms of 3 years but a member may serve
44 after the expiration of his term until his successor has been appointed and qualified.

45 Members of the commission shall receive no compensation for their services on the
46 commission but may receive reasonable expenses for travel when engaged in commission
47 business if the expenses are not reimbursed by any other source.

48 The chairperson of the commission shall be elected by the members of the commission
49 for a term of 1 year and may be eligible for re-election to subsequent terms. A simple majority of
50 the members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The commission shall
51 meet at least quarterly. In addition, the commission may meet at the call of the chairperson or a
52 majority of its members.

53 SECTION 4. The commission may, for the purpose of this act, hold such hearings, sit
54 and act at such times and places, take such testimony and receive such evidence, as the
55 commission may deem necessary. The commission may make such bylaws, rules and regulations
56 as it deems necessary to carry out its functions. When so authorized by the commission, a

57 member or agent of the commission may take any action which the commission is authorized to
58 take by this section.

59 The commission may establish and appoint technical advisory groups and subcommittees
60 to provide technical advice in financing, historic preservation, natural resource preservation,
61 recreation, tourism, and intergovernmental coordination. Notwithstanding any other general or
62 special law to the contrary, the commission may seek, accept and dispose of donations of funds,
63 property and services from individuals, foundations, corporations and other private entities and
64 from public entities for the purpose of carrying out its duties. The commission may use funds to
65 obtain money from any sources under any program or law requiring the recipient of such money
66 to make a contribution in order to receive such money. The commission may obtain, by
67 purchase, rental, donation or otherwise, such property, facilities and services as may be needed to
68 carry out its duties. The commission may acquire real property or interests in real property in the
69 district by gift, rental or purchase with money which was given, bequeathed or appropriated to
70 the commission on the condition that the money would be used to purchase real property or
71 interests therein in the district.

72 The commission may establish such advisory groups as the commission deems necessary
73 to ensure open communication with and assistance from the secretary of the United States
74 Department of the Interior, the commonwealth, political subdivisions thereof and interested
75 persons.

76 The commission may enter into cooperative assessments with the secretary of the United
77 States Department of the Interior, the commonwealth, political subdivisions therefore, the
78 commonwealth or any other person.