

HOUSE No. 4021

Section 97 contained in the engrossed Bill making appropriations for the fiscal year 2020 (see House, No. 4000), which had been returned by His Excellency the Governor with recommendation of amendment (for message, see Attachment G of House, No. 4014). July 31, 2019.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court
(2019-2020)

An Act relative to the environmental health of the Blue Hills Reservation.

Whereas, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to forthwith provide for the environmental health of the Blue Hills Reservation, therefore it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public convenience.

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. The University of Massachusetts shall select an independent scientific
2 organization to conduct a study and survey of the environmental health of the Blue Hills
3 Reservation, which shall include: (i) the forest, including plant, animal and insect life, and any
4 contributing factors responsible for any decline in forest health; (ii) the effect of ecological and
5 climate change; (iii) the effectiveness of controlled public hunting in culling the deer population;
6 (iv) the effectiveness of the Blue Hills Reservation deer management program in culling the deer
7 population since 2015; and (v) recommendations to ensure improvements in the environmental
8 health of the reservation. The study shall include the physical tagging of deer for purposes of
9 population surveying; provided, however, that methods may include but shall not be limited to (i)

fixed-wing aircraft or unmanned aerial vehicles using aerial photography and downward-looking thermal imaging; and (ii) distance sampling using driving transects and spotlights.

The University of Massachusetts shall select an organization to conduct the study and survey within 6 months after the effective date of this act, and the independent scientific organization shall report its findings and data in the form of a report and survey, which shall include proposed recommendations and the costs associated with those recommendations, to the department of conservation and recreation and the department of fisheries and wildlife within 4 years following the start of the study.

There shall be a moratorium on the Blue Hills Reservation deer management program and any controlled deer hunting in the reservation until July 31, 2021.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect as of July 1, 2019.