

HOUSE No. 470

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Mindy Domb

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 concerning climate science education.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Mindy Domb</i>	<i>3rd Hampshire</i>	<i>1/20/2023</i>

HOUSE No. 470

By Representative Domb of Amherst, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 470) of Mindy Domb relative to climate science education and establishing a climate science education trust fund. Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)**

An Act concerning climate science education.

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 29 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after
2 section 2AAAAAA the following section:-

3 Section 2BBBBBB. (a) (1) To achieve, promote and support the instruction of climate
4 science education for K-12 public school students in districts across the commonwealth, there
5 shall be established and set up on the books of the commonwealth a separate fund to be known as
6 the Climate Science Education Trust Fund. The fund can be used to support the development,
7 purchase and implementation of curriculum and educational resources related to professional
8 development for educators and costs associated with curriculum implementation. The
9 professional and resource development funded by the Climate Science Education Trust Fund can
10 seek to increase students’ understanding of one’s influence on climate and climate’s influence on
11 the individual and society and students’ knowledge and capacity to: (i) understand earth’s
12 climate system, the natural and human caused factors that affect the climate and contribute to

13 climate change, through observations, data collection and analysis and the ability to evaluate and
14 construct scientific explanations about climate leading to decisions that improve quality of life
15 and environmental health; (ii) assess scientifically credible information about climate; (iii)
16 communicate about climate and climate change in a meaningful way; (iv) make informed and
17 responsible decisions with regard to actions that may affect climate; (v) understand the strategies
18 used by the commonwealth to address climate impacts concerning policy, community action and
19 individual behavior; (vi) demonstrate awareness of the fundamental relationship between climate
20 and society; (vii) take action to reduce the crisis in climate; and (viii) build the skills that will
21 inspire and prepare them for potential careers related to climate change.

22 (2) The commissioner of elementary and secondary education shall administer the fund to
23 assist in promoting the instruction of age-appropriate climate science issues in all public schools
24 and school districts. There shall be credited to the fund:

25 (i) revenue from appropriations and other money authorized by the general court and
26 specifically designated to be credited to the fund;

27 (ii) funds from public and private sources such as gifts, grants and donations to further
28 climate science education; and

29 (iii) interest earned on money in the fund.

30 Amounts credited to the fund shall not be subject to further appropriation and any money
31 remaining in the fund at the end of a fiscal year shall not revert to the General Fund.

32 (b)(1) Amounts credited to the fund may be expended, without further appropriation, by
33 the commissioner for purposes related to the instruction of elementary, middle and high school
34 students on climate science, including, but not limited to:

35 (i) development, purchase, distribution and implementation of curricular materials
36 detailing the underlying causes, international reaction, history and progression of scientific
37 climate research; evidence based policy solutions; and the role of climate and environmental
38 activism in making policy change; and

39 (ii) professional development training, including the provision of trainings, seminars,
40 conferences and materials, for educators to use in the teaching of climate science in K-12 grades.
41 Annually, not less than 50 per cent of the funds expended shall be allocated to public schools or
42 school districts.

43 (2) In expending amounts credited to the fund, the commissioner may prioritize:

44 (i) underserved communities across the commonwealth including, those public schools or
45 school districts with high concentrations of economically-disadvantaged students; those public
46 schools or school districts who serve students from environmental justice populations, as defined
47 in section 62 of chapter 30; or who exist in designated communities with environmental justice
48 populations;

49 (ii) communities that have or will in the future experience disproportionate effects of the
50 change in climate; and

51 (iii) schools implementing a climate science program for the first time consistent with the
52 standards set by the department of elementary and secondary education.

53 (c) Amounts received from private sources shall be approved by the commissioner of
54 elementary and secondary education and subject to review before being deposited in the fund to
55 ensure that pledged funds are not accompanied by conditions, explicit or implicit, on the
56 implementation of climate science programming that may be detrimental to the neutral and
57 rigorous teaching of climate science or unduly influence the direction of climate science policy.
58 The review shall be made publicly available on the department's website.

59 (d)(1) There shall be a competitive grant program to promote the instruction of
60 elementary, middle and high school students on climate science developed and administered by
61 the department of elementary and secondary education for all public, vocational and
62 collaborative schools. The department may expend funds from the fund for this grant program.

63 (2) The department shall prioritize grant applications that include:

64 (i) input from relevant community stakeholders including, but not limited to, local
65 officials, municipal environmental commissions and community-based environmental
66 organizations; or

67 (ii) plans to partner with community-based environmental education or environmental
68 justice organizations or otherwise engage with the applicant's local community; or

69 (iii) plans to partner with environmental justice populations, as defined in section 62 of
70 chapter 30, and their communities including, community-based environmental organizations that
71 engage with environmental justice populations.

72 (3) The department may use funds, public information sessions, technical assistance and
73 other resources and outreach efforts as needed to ensure that every public school and school
74 district has an opportunity to apply for grants.

75 (e) Annually, not later than October 1, the commissioner of elementary and secondary
76 education shall report to the clerks of the senate and house of representatives, the joint committee
77 on education and the house and senate committees on ways and means on the fund's activities.
78 The report shall include, but not be limited to:

79 (i) the source and amount of funds received;

80 (ii) the expenditures made from the fund and the purposes of such expenditures;

81 (iii) the names and towns of school districts that have received grants, indicating those
82 that serve environmental justice populations, other partner organizations and the estimated
83 number of students, grade levels, and classes who were projected to benefit from the grant and
84 education program;

85 (iv) any anticipated remaining revenue from awards;

86 (v) the number of schools and school districts that have used the fund to implement a new
87 program or enhance or maintain current programming; and

88 (vi) the number of schools and school districts that applied for, but were not granted,
89 funding; and

90 (vii) the report shall be publicly available on the department's website, along with the
91 names and sources of materials developed or used and the partner organizations enlisted, as a
92 result of the grant awards.

93 SECTION 2. The fifteenth paragraph of section 11 of chapter 69 of the General Laws, is
94 hereby amended by striking out clauses (l) and (m) and inserting in place thereof the following 3
95 clauses:-

96 (l) nutrition and wellness programs;

97 (m) genocide education programs; and

98 (n) climate science education programs.

99 SECTION 3. Said section 11 of said chapter 69, as so appearing, is hereby further
100 amended by inserting after the sixteenth paragraph the following paragraph:-

101 Annually, not later than October 1, the commissioner shall provide a report on the
102 progress of climate science education programs in public schools and school districts to the
103 clerks of the senate and house of representatives and the joint committee on education. The
104 report shall provide a description of the manner in which grantees under subsection (d) of section
105 2BBBBBB of chapter 29 are offering climate science instruction including: (i) the number of
106 hours of instruction public schools and school districts project will be offered as a result of the
107 award; (ii) the grade levels at which such instruction is offered and the titles and sources for the
108 curricula used to implement climate science education; and (iii) the title and description of the
109 courses in which such instruction is integrated.

110 SECTION 4. Chapter 71 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following
111 section:-

112 Section 100. (a) For purposes of this section, the following term shall have the following
113 meaning:

114 “Climate science education” - an understanding of human influence on climate and
115 climate’s influence on humans and society. As a result of climate science education, students will
116 understand the essential principles of earth’s climate system; be able to assess scientifically
117 credible information about climate and communicate about climate and climate change in a
118 meaningful way; will have the ability to make informed decisions with regard to actions that may
119 affect climate; and can take actions to reduce climate change and its impacts.

120 (b) The department shall establish a process to ensure that curriculum standards for the
121 subjects of science, technology, history, social science and civics are reviewed to include,
122 relevant interdisciplinary climate change standards that will incorporate:

123 (i) an understanding of climate;

124 (ii) the interconnected nature of climate change;

125 (iii) the potential local and global impacts of climate change;

126 (iv) the individual, societal and governmental actions that may mitigate the harmful
127 effects of climate change; and

128 (v) the role of political engagement and activism in making environmental and climate
129 change policy.

130 (c) The department may provide trainings, seminars, conferences and materials for
131 educators and community-based environmental organizations to use in the teaching of climate
132 science in person or through the use of synchronous or asynchronous audio, video, electronic
133 media or other telecommunications technology in order to support the goals of climate science

134 education. The department may also support school district training for parents and guardians to
135 share curricular goals and topics.

136 (d) The office of climate innovation and resilience may be provided with an opportunity
137 to advise the department on educating and informing public schools and school districts on
138 matters related to climate in the commonwealth.

139 SECTION 5. Section 4 shall take effect for the school year beginning after July 1, 2024.