

SENATE No. 2730

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)

SENATE, November 24, 2025.

The committee on Environment and Natural Resources, to whom was referred the petitions (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 600) of Dylan A. Fernandes for legislation to establish a blue communities program to incentivize local action to reduce nutrient pollution and ocean acidification; (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 603) of Dylan A. Fernandes for legislation to establish a blue economy workforce pipeline; and (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 605) of Dylan A. Fernandes for legislation relative to a future blue economy, report the accompanying bill (Senate, No. 2730).

For the committee,
Rebecca L. Rausch

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
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An Act relative to a future blue economy.

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 21 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding, after section
2 67, the following section:-

3 Section 68. (a) For purposes of this section, the following terms shall have the following
4 meanings unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

5 “Circular economy”, an economy that keeps material, products, and services in
6 circulation for as long as possible.

7 “Department”, the department of environmental protection.

8 “Environmental justice population”, as defined in section 56 of chapter 8.

9 (b) The department shall create a circular economy education and outreach program to
10 inform residents and businesses in the commonwealth about a circular economy generally and
11 how to participate in a transition to a circular economy.

12 (c) Subject to appropriation, the department shall establish a competitive grant program
13 to provide funding to small businesses in the commonwealth to support a transition to a circular
14 economy. The department shall be authorized to accept applications from businesses that are
15 incorporated in, are properly licensed to do business in, or have a location in Massachusetts. All
16 grants made under this program should provide a measurable economic benefit to Massachusetts.
17 The department shall determine a list of criteria in evaluating grant applications and prioritize
18 applications otherwise meeting all other necessary criteria from: (i) certified minority-owned and
19 women-owned business enterprises; (ii) businesses that are geographically located within an
20 environmental justice population; and (iii) businesses that provide substantial benefit to
21 environmental justice populations. The department is authorized to use its discretion to decide
22 between applications of similar standing. The department shall promulgate regulations to support
23 the creation of the program.

24 SECTION 2. Chapter 21A of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding, after
25 section 28, the following section:-

26 Section 29. Subject to appropriation, the secretary of energy and environmental affairs
27 shall establish a grant program to provide funding to Massachusetts nonprofits, academic
28 institutions, and businesses to conduct scientific research and the research and development of
29 new technology created for the purpose of improving ocean health and the responsible use of the
30 ocean. This funding may be used for scientific studies and other research, research and
31 development of new technology, investment into existing beneficial technology, expansion of
32 existing beneficial technology, or research into how the technology affects the Commonwealth,
33 the state economy, or particular industries. The secretary shall promulgate rules and regulations
34 to support the creation of a grant program. The secretary shall accept applications from entities

35 that are incorporated in, are properly licensed to do business in, or have a location in
36 Massachusetts. All grants made under this program should provide a measurable economic
37 benefit to the Massachusetts ocean economy.

38 In awarding grant funding, the secretary shall prioritize projects with the most
39 measurable benefit to the ocean environment, marine species, or coastal communities; projects
40 using existing technology that is identified as the best available prototype in the field; projects
41 with outcomes that promote equity and inclusivity; and projects that promote the use of time-
42 series data. Applications that satisfy one or more of these criteria shall be considered favorably in
43 priority of awards for funding, so long as those applications meet all other necessary criteria. The
44 secretary is authorized to use discretion to decide between applications of similar standing.

45 SECTION 3. Chapter 69 of the General Laws, is hereby amended by adding, after section
46 1T, the following section:-

47 Section 1U. Subject to appropriation, there shall be within the department of elementary
48 and secondary education a blue economy education fund to be used to provide funding to the
49 Commonwealth's high schools to expand educational development, workforce training, and job
50 placement programs in blue-STEAM industries. Blue-STEAM industries are defined as ocean
51 sector jobs in science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics.

52 The department shall create an application process for interested high schools to apply to
53 the blue economy education fund. All funding shall be prioritized to applications by high schools
54 located within an environmental justice community or composed of a substantial number of
55 students from environmental justice communities, as defined in section 62 of chapter 30.