

**SENATE . . . . . No.**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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PRESENTED BY:

***Dylan A. Fernandes***

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*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 a future blue economy.**

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PETITION OF:

NAME:

*Dylan A. Fernandes*

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

*Plymouth and Barnstable*

**SENATE . . . . . No.**

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[Pin Slip]

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[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION  
SEE SENATE, NO. 535 OF 2023-2024.]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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

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. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection shall establish a  
4 competitive grant program to provide funding to Massachusetts small businesses for the  
5 transition to a circular economy. Circular economy is defined as an economy that keeps material,  
6 products, and services in circulation for as long as possible. The department shall promulgate  
7 regulations to support the creation of the program. The department shall be authorized to accept  
8 applications from businesses that are incorporated in, are properly licensed to do business in, or  
9 have a location in Massachusetts. All grants made under this program should provide a  
10 measurable economic benefit to Massachusetts.

11           The department shall evaluate a list of criteria in awarding grant applications. The  
12 Department shall prioritize applications that fall under any of the following categories:  
13 applications that are from (i) certified minority-owned and women-owned business enterprises;  
14 (ii) businesses that are geographically located within an environmental justice population; and  
15 (iii) businesses that provide substantial benefit to environmental justice populations, as long as  
16 these applications meet all other necessary criteria. Environmental justice populations are  
17 defined in section 56 of chapter 8. The department is authorized to use its discretion to decide  
18 between applications of similar standing.

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

21           Section 29. The Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs shall establish a grant  
22 program to provide funding to Massachusetts nonprofits, academic institutions, and businesses to  
23 conduct scientific research and the research and development of new technology created for the  
24 purpose of improving ocean health and the responsible use of the ocean. This funding may be  
25 used for scientific studies and other research, research and development of new technology,  
26 investment into existing beneficial technology, expansion of existing beneficial technology, or  
27 research into how the technology affects the Commonwealth, the state economy, or particular  
28 industries. The department shall promulgate rules and regulations to support the creation of a  
29 grant program. The department shall accept applications from entities that are incorporated in,  
30 are properly licensed to do business in, or have a location in Massachusetts. All grants made  
31 under this program should provide a measurable economic benefit to the Massachusetts ocean  
32 economy.

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

40 SECTION 3. Chapter 69 of the General Laws, is hereby amended by adding, after section  
41 1T, the following section:-

42 Section 1U. There shall be within the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and  
43 Secondary Education a Blue Economy Education Fund to be used to provide funding to the  
44 Commonwealth's high schools to expand educational development, workforce training, and job  
45 placement programs in blue-STEAM industries. Blue-STEAM industries are defined as ocean  
46 sector jobs in science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics.

47 The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education shall create an application  
48 process for interested high schools to apply to the Blue Economy Education Fund. All funding  
49 shall be prioritized to applications by high schools located within an environmental justice  
50 community or composed of a substantial number of students from environmental justice  
51 communities, as defined in section 62 of chapter 30 as amended by Chapter 8 of the Acts of  
52 2021.