



ESSEX NATIONAL
HERITAGE AREA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**COMMONWEALTH RECOGNIZES VALUE OF
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREAS**

Gov. Patrick signs law encouraging cooperation

For Immediate Release (Salem, MA) ...Essex Heritage (The Essex National Heritage Commission), a regional advocate for the quality of life on the North Shore lauds Governor Deval Patrick for signing legislation important to the recognition of the five MA National Heritage Areas, including Essex Heritage. The new bill recognizes the five Areas as entities in the service of public good, directs state agencies and departments to consider the Areas in their plans and makes possible public-private partnerships for joint projects that advance their goals of environmental protection, heritage resource preservation, recreation, tourism and trail development.

“Essex Heritage is very pleased with this new legislation as it encourages closer cooperation between our organization and state agencies in the areas of trail development, scenic byways, land conservation, and cultural tourism,” said Annie Harris, Executive Director of Essex Heritage. “We are very grateful to our team of local legislators who see the economic value Heritage Areas bring to the region, and who worked hard on our behalf, for the bills passage.”

The legislation signed by Gov. Patrick is a re-drafted version of House Bill H3142 introduced by Rep. Fennell and co-sponsored by Senators Tarr and McGee. The bill was re-introduced by

Representative John Keenan and championed by Senators Frederick Berry and Benjamin Downing. The signed legislation now encourages and enables state agencies, departments and entities to consider Massachusetts' Heritage Areas when developing planning documents and processes; and authorizes partnership with Heritage Areas on projects that preserve and promote the historic, cultural and natural resources of our region.

“This legislation will recognize all the National Heritage Areas in the Commonwealth and allow each to receive state funds directly. The Essex National Heritage Area continues to do tremendous work in our region fostering cultural tourism, education and preservation of historic areas. We are fortunate to have Heritage Areas working in a close collaborative effort to preserve and enhance areas across the state,” said Representative John Keenan, Chairman Committee on Tourism, Arts and Cultural Development.

Senator Frederick Berry, who worked to gain Senate support for the measure added, “This law is a key and necessary step in recognizing Heritage Areas as a worthy and fiscally responsible partner in the use of public funds for the public good. The Heritage Area’s track record of success and accountability make them a valuable partner that can collaborate with public and private entities to skillfully execute projects at the local level.”

The five MA National Heritage Areas covered by this new law include the Essex National Heritage Area, the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor (known as The Last Green Valley), the Upper Housatonic National Heritage Area, and the Freedoms Way National Heritage Area. National Heritage Areas are congressional designated in perpetuity and have historically received an annual stipend of funds through the U. S. Department of Interior/National Park Service to assist in the execution of [their](#) mission. Federal funds are generally supplemented by private and foundation funds, and in some Areas, state allocations.

About the Essex National Heritage Area and Essex Heritage



Designated by the US Congress in recognition of the important role that this region played in American history and its significant heritage sites still remaining, the Essex National Heritage Area is comprised of the 34 communities of Essex County, MA. Essex Heritage is a non profit agency that manages the Heritage Area, and works in collaboration with the National Park Service to promote public/private partnerships, and develop programs that enhance, preserve and encourage regional awareness of the Area's unique historic, cultural and natural resources. For more information, visit Essex Heritage at www.essexheritage.org or call (978) 740-0444.