

HOUSE No. 242

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Bud L. Williams

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 to establish the Western Massachusetts balanced sustainable development commission.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Bud L. Williams</i>	<i>11th Hampden</i>	<i>1/14/2023</i>

HOUSE No. 242

By Representative Williams of Springfield, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 242) of Bud L. Williams for legislation to establish the Western Massachusetts balanced sustainable development commission. Community Development and Small Businesses.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 302 OF 2021-2022.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act to establish the Western Massachusetts balanced sustainable development commission.

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. Whereas the Western portion of Massachusetts, specifically the Pioneer
2 Valley has different characteristics than the Eastern portion, in terms of population density, types
3 of industry, access of population to undeveloped land, visibility to the Boston media, and so
4 forth, and

5 Whereas over time thee different characteristics have led to differentials in the impacts of
6 policies and programs adopted from time to in the area of housing, fair housing, school
7 integration, regional transportation, taxation, and economic development, and

8 Whereas this differential impact may have played some part in the fact that this Western
9 portion of Massachusetts, now defined as the Springfield Region, has been Nationally recognized

10 as having a generally high level of racial segregation, including the highest level of White-
11 Hispanic segregation in the United States, and

12 Whereas this same area has also underperformed in comparison with the Eastern portion
13 of the Commonwealth in terms of its ability to implement modern sustainability strategies such
14 as mass transportation, balanced housing, and economic development in general, then

15 Section 2. Therefore it is resolved that this Western Massachusetts Balanced
16 Sustainable Development Act is hereby adopted by the Massachusetts General Court to
17 implement the following measures:

18 1. To mandate that a regional Sustainable Development Commission be created
19 consisting of representatives of regional planning agencies in Hampden, Hampshire, and
20 Franklin Counties together with representatives of organizations concerned with fair housing,
21 organized labor, and chambers of commerce or similar organizations concerned with economic
22 development recognized by the General Court in the impacted area to annually track and assess
23 the impact of State policies on the Springfield Region and make recommendations to the General
24 Court for appropriate modifications of these policies, and recommendations as to the
25 appropriateness of pending legislation and other policies of the Commonwealth which may have
26 a differential effect on the Region; and

27 2. To further mandate that the said Commission devise strategies of remediation or
28 plans to counter any negative impacts of past policies of the Commonwealth so as to create a
29 more racially and economically integrated, economically vital, and environmentally sustainable
30 region in the future; and

31 3. To further mandate and authorize creation of a special, tax-exempt, urban and
32 regional development corporation, to be controlled jointly by regional elected officials,
33 representatives of business organizations, and representatives of organized labor, which shall
34 have the power make contracts, acquire property through eminent domain, buy and sell bonds, as
35 it sees appropriate to implement development programs and projects required to implement the
36 remediation strategies and/or plans developed by the Sustainable Development Commission to
37 create more balanced housing, more effective development in the fields of commercial or
38 industrial development, or other development as it the Commission may determine based on its
39 research and consultation with the populace and institutions of the Springfield Region and/or
40 Pioneer Valley.