HOUSE . . . . . No. 2906

By Mr. Morrissey of Quincy, petition of Michael W. Morrissey relative to the establishment of the Massachusetts conservation corps within the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. Commerce and Labor.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Eighty-Seven.

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE MASSACHUSETTS CONSERVATION CORPS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 Chapter 21A of the General Laws is hereby amended by insert-
2 ing after section 4 the following new sections: —
3 Section 4A. The secretary shall establish a program of year-
4 round conservation, rehabilitation, and improvement which shall
5 be known as the Massachusetts Conservation Corps, hereinafter
6 known as the corps. The secretary shall have the following powers
7 and duties pursuant to this section: —
8 (a) Recruit and employ members of the corps, subjects to the
9 provisions herein.
10 (b) Execute contracts containing such terms and conditions as
11 are deemed necessary and desirable for the employment of corps
12 members, subject to the provisions herein.
13 (c) Apply for and accept grants or contributions of funds from
14 any public or private source.
15 (d) Purchase, rent, or otherwise acquire necessary supplies,
16 equipment, and property.
17 (e) Execute contracts for furnishing the services of the corps to
18 any federal, state, or local agency, or to any private agency, organi-
19 zation, or individual under the provisions of subsection (o) of
20 section 4B.
21 (f) Procure insurance.
22 (g) Receive reimbursements from any public or private agency,

23 organization, or individual for actual expenses incurred by the
24 corps on behalf of such agency, organization, or individual.
25 Section 4B. The corps shall engage in labor-intensive projects
26 for conserving, improving, or developing publicly owned natural
27 resources, and enhancing, preserving, and maintaining public
28 lands and waters. Projects engaged in may include, but shall not be
29 limited to, the following activities: —
30 (a) Forestry and nursery operations.
31 (b) Endangered species and other wildlife habitat conservation,
32 rehabilitation, and improvement.
33 (c) Urban cleanup and beautification.
34 (d) Historical and cultural site preservation and maintenance.
35 (e) Recreation area development, maintenance, improvement,
36 and beautification.
37 (f) Road and trail maintenance and development.
38 (g) Soil conservation work, including erosion control.
39 (h) Flood, drought, and storm damage assistance and relief.
40 (i) Stream, lake, waterfront harbor, and port improvement and
41 pollution control.
42 (j) Fish culture and habitat maintenance and improvement.
43 (k) Insect, disease, rodent, and other pestilence control.
44 (l) Public landscape work and tree planting programs.
45 (m) Emergency assistance in times of natural and other disas-
46 ters.
47 (n) Enhancement of renewable resources, including but not
48 limited to energy, agricultural, and food resources.
49 Section 4C. The secretary shall ensure that projects selected
50 under section 4B shall be consistent with all other provisions of
51 applicable state and federal laws relating to the management and
52 oversight of affected public lands. The secretary shall promulgate
53 rules and regulations necessary to implement the provisions of
54 sections 4A, 4B, 4C, and 4D, subject to the requirements of chapter
55 30A of the General Laws. Such rules and regulations shall include
56 but not be limited to the following: —
57 (a) A procedure for receiving, evaluating, and accepting or re-
58 jecting applications for the services of the corps.
59 (b) A method of inspecting and auditing the completed work of
60 the corps.

61 No project shall be undertaken if such a project will displace
62 regular workers in related activities not associated with the corps.
63 The administrative officers of the departments, bureaus, boards,
64 commissions, and divisions of the office shall assist the secretary in
65 the design and implementation of projects which are consistent
66 with the purposes of this act and which may be operated through
67 their agencies.
68 Section 4D. Enrollment in the corps shall be limited to individ-
69 uals who, at the time of their enrollment, meet the following
70 conditions: —
71 (a) Are lawful permanent residents of the commonwealth.
72 (b) Are unemployed.
73 (c) Are not less than sixteen but not more than twenty-five years
74 of age, except that any summer programs operated by the corps
75 during the months of June, July, and August shall be limited to
76 individuals who, at the time of their enrollment, are not less than
77 fifteen but not more than twenty-one years of age.
78 (d) Are able to verify that they did not withdraw from school or
79 leave full-time employment for the express purpose of enrolling in
80 the corps.
81 All enrollees shall receive compensation equal to the federal
82 minimum wage. No enrollee shall serve in the corps for a period
83 exceeding twenty-four cumulative months. Preference for enrol-
84 lment shall be given to applicants residing in areas in which sub-
85 stantial unemployment exists. The secretary shall ensure that ef-
86 forts are made to enroll persons who are socially, economically,
87 physically, or educationally disadvantaged.
88 No enrollee shall be subject to the provisions of chapter 31 or
89 section 9A of chapter 30 of the General Laws. No enrollee shall be
90 deemed to be an employee of the commonwealth entitled to bene-
91 fits from the workmen's compensation act, nor shall he be deemed
92 to be an employee of the commonwealth for any other purpose
93 except as provided in sections 4A through 4D, inclusive.