

HOUSE No.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Michael J. Rodrigues

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 passage of the accompanying bill:

An Act to protect the eastern box turtle.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Michael J. Rodrigues

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

8th Bristol

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Nine

AN ACT TO PROTECT THE EASTERN BOX TURTLE.

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. There is hereby established a special commission to study the development,
2 implementation and financing of a conservation management plan for the protection of the eastern box
3 turtle in the Massachusetts. The commission shall consist of 7 members: 1 of whom shall be the
4 commissioner of the department of environmental protection, or her designee, who shall serve as the
5 chair of the commission; 1 of whom shall be the director of the department of fish and game, or her
6 designee; 1 of whom shall be the executive director of the Lloyd Center for Environmental Studies, or his
7 designee; and 6 members to be appointed by the governor, 1 of whom shall be a member of the
8 Massachusetts Audubon Society, 1 of whom shall be a member of the Massachusetts Wildlife
9 Federation; 1 of whom shall be a member of the Nature Conservancy of Massachusetts, 1 of whom shall
10 be a member of the Home Builders Association of Massachusetts, 1 of whom shall be a member of the
11 National Association of Industrial and Office Properties of Massachusetts and 1 of whom shall be a
12 member of the Massachusetts Farm Bureau.

13 The study shall include but shall not be limited to: an assessment and prioritization of the
14 habitat needs of the eastern box turtle based upon the extent, quality and juxtaposition of habitats and

15 their predicted ability to support a self-sustaining population, including the size and lack of
16 fragmentation of habitat and proximity and connectivity to other relatively uninterrupted habitats,
17 especially within existing protected open space; and the consideration of various strategies to reduce
18 the need to include certain properties in the Natural Heritage Atlas published by the Natural Heritage
19 and Endangered Species Program, including, but not limited to, the purchase of conservation land by the
20 commonwealth and the creation of incentives to encourage the use of conservation restrictions and
21 agricultural preservation restrictions by private property owners

22 The commission shall file a report of its study together with its recommendations for legislation,
23 if any, with the clerks of the house and senate no later than December 31, 2009.