



Legislative Report Card

Massachusetts Audubon Society

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THE ENVIRONMENTAL ROLL CALL VOTES OF 2000

Since 1985, the Massachusetts Audubon Society has published the environmental voting records of the Massachusetts legislature in order to inform citizens of their state legislators' performance in protecting the nature of Massachusetts.

In practice, many bills are passed by 'voice votes'. In these cases, the speaker or senate president judges a motion's outcome based on the members' oral responses in the chamber, or on their written or vocal communications prior to open consideration in the House or Senate chambers. Otherwise, when one-fifth of the legislative body requests a call of the 'yeas' and 'nays', each member's vote is recorded on a roll call, and is printed in the legislative journal.

This report card is a compilation of the roll call votes by state legislators on environmental bills or funding measures. It is not a personal evaluation of legislators. It does not reflect the time and energy many legislators expend advocating on behalf of their constituents to secure state or federal grant funds for parks or open space projects, or to draft, file, and testify on behalf of environmental legislation in public hearings. This report card includes each legislator's roll call votes on environmental issues when he or she stood and were counted during the formal debate.

In preparing this report card, we first catalogued all roll call votes on record at the Senate and House Clerks' offices. We then culled out those roll calls that impact natural resources. We graded legislators as follows:

a vote for the environment is given two points; a vote against the environment is given zero points; and a legislator's absence, or presence but not voting, is given one point. The scores of individual legislators are calculated by dividing the total points a legislator earned by the maximum possible score.

The score of an individual legislator may fluctuate year to year. However, an examination of an individual legislator's voting record over the term of one's service presents a revealing portrait of his or her commitment to environmental protection.

During the year 2000, the House of Representatives voted by roll call on seventeen major environmental items. The Senate voted by roll call on thirteen major environmental items. This past year represents a significant increase in the quality and quantity of environmental floor debate and roll calls, including issues of pesticide disclosure, beach water quality monitoring, cluster development design, and Upper Cape Cod's groundwater protection and habitat conservation.

We wish to applaud the members of the Massachusetts legislature for enriching the tradition of environmental advocacy, and especially for enacting, after fifteen years of debate, the *Community Preservation Act*, a landmark piece of legislation that will be esteemed by future generations.

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