

OFFERED BY COUNCILOR MICHELLE WU



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

AN ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING LOCAL WETLANDS PROTECTION LEGISLATION

WHEREAS: Climate change is an overriding public interest, against which current laws do not sufficiently protect, and which the City's Conservation Commission could more strongly address through a local wetlands ordinance; *and*,

WHEREAS: A total of 198 municipalities within the Commonwealth have enacted local wetlands ordinances, and those, such as Arlington, that have included consideration of climate change in their regulations, have effectively provided better protection against flooding and heat island effects; *and*

WHEREAS: The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection estimates that there are 209 wetland areas in Boston, totaling 346.63 acres. An additional 1,352.96 acres of land is subject to coastal storm flowage; *and*

WHEREAS: Every city council district in the City has wetlands and/or is affected by coastal storm flowage, yet Boston is one of only three coastal municipalities in the Commonwealth without a local wetlands ordinance; *and*

WHEREAS: Urban wetlands are an effective land use for alleviating the effects of climate change, particularly managing flooding and reducing the urban heat island effect, and wetlands provide important ecosystem services, such as water filtration, wildlife habitat, and pollution sequestration, including carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. The estimated valuation of ecosystem services provided by Boston's urban wetlands each year ranges between \$4,304 and \$89,462 per acre; *and*

WHEREAS: Boston's plans for climate adaptation include the development of green infrastructure, including the option to construct, restore, and revitalize local wetlands. Developing a local wetlands ordinance is a stated goal for the City, as expressed in the Climate Ready Boston initiative to develop a wetlands protection action plan; *NOW*

THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED:

That the appropriate committee of Boston City Council hold a hearing to examine the policies and resources available for the development and implementation of a local wetlands ordinance. Representatives from the Environment Department, Conservation Commission, Parks, The Nature Conservancy, the Conservation Law Foundation and other interested stakeholders shall be invited to testify.

Filed: July 11, 2018