

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court
(2019-2020)**

An Act to mitigate arbovirus in the Commonwealth.

Whereas, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is forthwith to make a certain change in law to allow the Commonwealth to immediately respond to the significant public health risks associated with the transmission of arbovirus from mosquitoes to humans, such change being immediately necessary to carry out to accomplish important public purposes, therefore it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public health and convenience.

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. Chapter 252 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2018 Official Edition,
2 is hereby amended by inserting after section 2 the following section:-

3 Section 2A. (a) Upon the written determination of the commissioner of public health
4 that an elevated risk of arbovirus exists or may exist for the following year, the board, in
5 consultation with the department of public health, may engage in preventive, management and
6 eradication methods as it deems necessary in any area of the commonwealth. The commissioner
7 shall publish the determination on the website of the department of public health and shall
8 include a summary of the data supporting the determination. The commissioner shall also
9 provide notice to the chairs of the joint committees on public health and environment, natural
10 resources and agriculture of the determination. In carrying out its authority under this section, the

11 board may act through any district or project duly organized under this chapter, other agencies of
12 the commonwealth, and may employ other professionals as the board deems necessary.

13 (b) (1) The board shall provide notice of the methods employed pursuant to subsection
14 (a), including the locations, dates, and times of aerial spraying or other wide-area emergency
15 operations, at least 48 hours prior to the application thereof, to entities within the affected areas
16 including (i) appropriate local and regional boards and commissions, including boards of health;
17 (ii) property owners who have opted out of spraying; (iii) agricultural entities including
18 beekeepers, cranberry growers, certified organic farms, and aquaculture facilities; and (iv) any
19 other persons that inform the board through a form on the board's website that they wish to be
20 informed of aerial spraying in their region. Any aerial spraying notice shall also specify the
21 particular product to be sprayed and any health risks associated with the product. The board shall
22 also provide such notice to all other entities within affected areas as provided in the
23 Massachusetts emergency operations response plan for mosquito-borne illnesses, as amended
24 from time to time, including integrated pest management standard written notices to schools, day
25 care centers and school age child care programs. The board shall also provide notice to such
26 entities and to the general public by posting the notice to its website at least 48 hours prior to
27 application and informing local officials and the legislative representatives of the areas being
28 sprayed. Notice provided under this subsection shall also include the procedure for owners of
29 property located within the spraying area, including those with property located outside of a
30 mosquito control district, to opt out of aerial spraying or other wide-area emergency operations.

31 (2) The department of public health shall develop a process or guidance for the board to
32 allow municipalities to opt out of spraying conducted pursuant to subsection (a), provided that

33 any such process or guidance requires municipalities to have their alternative mosquito
34 management plan approved by the department.

35 (c) Within 30 days of the application of any preventive, management and eradication
36 methods under subsection (a), the board shall make available on its website a report summarizing
37 the specific methods used, the areas that were sprayed, the number of applications, the products
38 applied, and the results of the actions.

39 (d) All actions taken under the authority of this section shall be designed to protect
40 public health while minimizing to the extent feasible any adverse impact to the environment.

41 SECTION 2. Section 2A of chapter 252 of the General Laws is hereby repealed.

42 SECTION 3. (a) There is hereby created a mosquito control for the 21st century task
43 force. The task force shall study the commonwealth's mosquito control process established under
44 chapter 252 of the General Laws and this act, and recommend comprehensive reforms of the
45 commonwealth's mosquito control system. The task force shall be chaired by the commissioner
46 of public health, or designee, and include: 1 representative of the department of agricultural
47 resources; 1 representative of the department of conservation and recreation; 1 representative of
48 the department of environmental protection; 1 representative of the division of fish and wildlife;
49 and 2 representatives to be chosen by the state reclamation and mosquito control board, 1 of
50 whom shall be a representative of a city or town that is part of a mosquito control district and 1
51 of whom shall be a representative of a city or town that is not part of a mosquito control district
52 but had significant mosquito activity in the past year.

53 The task force shall include additional members chosen by the commissioner of public health
54 who are representatives of: a statewide land conservation organization; a regional or statewide
55 river protection organization; a statewide wildlife protection organization; an academic

56 epidemiologist with expertise in arbovirus spread and control; an academic expert in pesticides
57 and mosquito control; an organization representing farms and agriculture; an organization
58 representing organic farms and agriculture; and an organization representing bee keepers or
59 groups concerned about pollinators.

60 (b) The chairs of the joint committees on public health and environment, natural resources and
61 agriculture, or designees, shall be observers and shall be invited to all meetings of the task force.

62 (c) All meetings of the task force shall be open to the public. The task force shall hold at least
63 one public listening session.

64 (d) The task force may commission a study by an independent research or academic organization
65 with expertise in the environmental and health effects of pesticides, pest management and
66 mosquito control to do a comprehensive evaluation of the 2020 mosquito control process. The
67 evaluation shall in particular determine the effectiveness of any spraying by examining the
68 impact of the spraying on arbovirus diseases, the cost-effectiveness of the spraying, the impact of
69 spraying on the environment, agriculture and wildlife, and other factors.

70 (d) The task force shall recommend legislation to amend current laws relative to mosquito
71 control in the commonwealth. In developing proposed legislation, the task force shall review and
72 make recommendations regarding the following: (i) facilitating the use of integrated pest
73 management, including surveillance, public education, enhanced habitat for mosquito predators,
74 and storm water management; (ii) promoting public participation in mosquito management
75 decisions; (iii) providing for local options regarding the use of pesticides; (iv) protection of
76 organic agriculture from pesticide use; (v) recommendations for changes, if any, to the
77 composition of the state reclamation and mosquito control board; (vi) development of procedures

78 to protect human and ecological health and minimize non-target impacts of mosquito pesticides,
79 including effects on persons with respiratory or immune system illnesses, drinking water
80 supplies, pollinators, and aquatic life; (vii) promoting the use of the safest or minimum risk
81 pesticides feasible and employing methods, including product disclosures or implementation of
82 testing protocols and procedures, to avoid the use of pesticides containing per- and
83 polyfluoroalkyl substances; (viii) providing for comprehensive annual evaluations of each
84 season's mosquito control process including the effectiveness of the process in controlling
85 arbovirus and any effects of spraying on the environment, agriculture and wildlife; and (ix) such
86 other priorities as the task force shall determine.

87 (e) The task force shall file its findings, recommendations and accompanying legislation with the
88 house and senate clerks and the chairs of the joint committees on public health and environment,
89 natural resources and agriculture before July 1, 2021.

90 SECTION 4. Section 2 of this act shall take effect on December 31, 2022.

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