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### **STRAUS COSPONSORS BILL PROTECTING WILDLIFE FUND**

Boston: Rep. Bill Straus (D-Mattapoisett) announced today that he was cosponsoring the Inland Game Bill which will restore \$4.7 million in federal matching grants to the State.

The Inland Game Fund is a separate State fund which was created decades ago in an effort to help state fish and wildlife agencies around the country preserve natural resources. With these programs, the agencies do not have to rely on general tax dollars to fund their efforts relying instead on local sportsmen. However, recent state budget language promoted by Governor Romney has rendered Massachusetts ineligible for matching federal grants under the national program. A recent ruling by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service has given Massachusetts thirty days to undo the new budget language before losing the federal grants.

Rep. Straus has been leading efforts to restore the Inland Game Fund since funding problems were first discovered in the FY 04 budget.

“I am confident that this bill will put the State in compliance with Federal regulations helping to ensure the State’s participation in fish and wildlife programs,” stated Straus. “These funds are vital to the State’s ability to adequately address the needs for protecting wildlife and the natural habitats on which they depend,” continued Straus.

On Tuesday, the House referred this Bill to the Committee on Natural Resources. A hearing has been scheduled for Thursday, October 16 at the State House.

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