



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 26, 2006

Contact: Rep. Bill Straus  
(617) 722-2040

### **HOUSE PASSES STRAUS PROPOSAL ON FARMING**

State Representative William M. Straus (D.-Mattapoisett) announced today that the Massachusetts House of Representatives has voted to approve his bill that will allow state, regional and municipal governments to lease publicly owned land for agricultural purposes.

“The intent of the legislation is to improve the productivity of conservation lands at the state and local level.” Said Representative Straus, “The lease agreements will preserve open space for municipalities while allowing farmers to benefit from the agricultural value of the land,” he added.

Jeff LaFleur, Executive Director of the Cape Cod Cranberry Grower’s Association said, “This act will increase the partnerships between publicly owned lands and the farmers who are willing to make capital investments to maintain and improve these lands.”

The legislation gives the leasing authority to the local board or agency with jurisdiction over the land and the agreements are not to exceed ten years to ensure the value of the land is maintained.

“Representative Straus has, with this act, helped Massachusetts farmers be able to commit to the long term care of the agricultural lands of Massachusetts,” said Nathan L’Etoile, Director of Communications for the Massachusetts Farm Bureau

The bill will now be sent to the Senate for consideration during this session of the Legislature.