

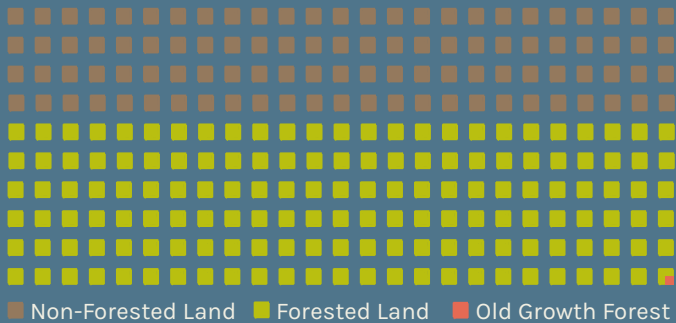
An Act Relative to the Protection of Old Growth Forests

HD264 Sponsored by Representative Natalie Blais (Sunderland)

The Facts

Old growth forests are **extremely rare** groves of ancient trees. Of 5 million acres of land in Massachusetts, only **1,500 acres** are old growth forest.

Land in Massachusetts: 1 box = 20,000 acres



Where?



Old growth is scattered throughout the state in **small patches** - mainly on steep mountainsides in Western Massachusetts.



They serve as **living laboratories** to learn about forest development, tree genetics, and climate change.



Canopy layers and fallen trees create **rich and diverse habitats** for many species of birds, insects, and reptiles.



Old growth forests act as **carbon sinks** to sequester greenhouse gases.

The Problem

Old growth forests in Massachusetts are not currently **lawfully protected** from timber cutting.

The Solution

Protection



Prohibit new development, recreational facilities, and commercial timber cutting in old growth forests.

Education



Create a **research and education** program to monitor the status and promote understanding of old growth forest reserves.

Growth



Assess and select forest areas which could one day meet the definition of an old growth forest to help ensure their long term protection.