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## **Senator Baddour Votes to Preserve Dairy Farms in Massachusetts**

*Senate offers assistance to state farms; focus on growth and technology*

(Boston, MA) – Senator Steven A. Baddour (D-Methuen) voted on Thursday to preserve Massachusetts dairy farms through recommendations made by the Dairy Farm Revitalization Task Force. The bill establishes the Massachusetts Dairy Promotion Board to boost the profile and operations of local dairy farms.

Senator Baddour said the bill will both improve and expand upon current dairy farm technologies and fund advertising and the utilization of advanced farming practices in the state.

“It is our obligation to provide our dairy farmers with the assistance they need to stabilize and improve state agriculture,” Senator Baddour said. “It’s an important industry for the Commonwealth, and this bill broadens the safety net recommended by the task force.”

The dairy farm task force, a joint effort of the executive and legislative branches, completed its work last fall. Building upon the work of the task force, the proposed legislation will enable the Department of Agricultural Resources to offer technical assistance and funds to farmers, making them eligible for loans for up to \$500,000.

The bill makes good on the promise that Senate President Therese Murray (D-Plymouth) made in her March 2007 inaugural address to maintain the Commonwealth’s agriculture industry and decrease the pressures of unfair regulations on farmers.

“Since July 2006, I have been working with Senator Stanley Rosenberg to ensure that the dairy farms, and agriculture as a whole, continue to be a part of the Massachusetts economy. I believe that we are getting closer to accomplishing the goals set forth by the Dairy Farm Revitalization Task Force, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to continue assisting the farming community”, said Senate President Murray.

Since 1980, the number of dairy farmers in Massachusetts has plummeted from more than 800 to fewer than 200. The bill will help preserve existing dairy farms and promote the industry as a legitimate and essential career choice for future farmers.

The legislation will also establish a commission to analyze and recommend options for improvement of new farming technologies.

This bill will now go the House of Representatives.

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