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## Horseshoe Crab Protection Bill Advances to House Ways & Means!

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Reply-To: slheller@comcast.net

Wed, May 6, 2026 at  
5:08 PM



## Horseshoe Crab Bill Strengthened and Advances to House Ways & Means

Dear Cliff

We are pleased to announce that H.898, An Act to End the Use of Horseshoe Crabs for Bait, has been strengthened and reported out favorably by the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.

**The bill has now been redesignated as H.5266 and referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means for further consideration.**

This marks an important step forward—not only because the bill is advancing, but because it has been thoughtfully expanded in scope.

## ◆ Recognizing Legislative Leadership

**Please join us in thanking the House Members of the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources** ([view members here](#)) for their leadership and forward-thinking approach and urge them to continue moving H. 5266 forward through the legislative process.

→[Read Bill H.5266](#)

**Reach out to the Sponsors of H.5266** ([formerly H.898](#)) ([view sponsors here](#)). Thank them for their leadership and ask them to advocate for H.5266.

**By strengthening this legislation, these legislators have demonstrated a clear understanding of:**

- The ecological importance of horseshoe crabs and the need to reduce harvest pressure, particularly in the context of declining populations and ongoing management concerns around the whelk fishery
- The transition from horseshoe crab–derived *Limulus Amebocyte Lysate* (LAL) to validated synthetic alternatives
- The policy direction emerging in neighboring states, including Connecticut and New York, where stronger protections have been enacted
- The importance of aligning environmental policy with current science and technological advancements

**This action reflects informed, forward-looking policymaking and positions Massachusetts to lead rather than follow.**

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## ◆ What H.5266 Now Does

**As strengthened, H.5266 advances a more comprehensive approach to horseshoe crab conservation and management. The bill:**

- Phases out the use of horseshoe crabs for bait
- Recognizes and supports the transition to synthetic alternatives in pharmaceutical testing
- Moves the Commonwealth toward a more sustainable, science-based management of this critical species

**This legislation marks a clear shift from exploitation toward long-term stewardship and recovery.**

## ◆ Return the Favor

For more than 50 years, horseshoe crabs have played a vital role in protecting human health through the use of Limulus Amebocyte Lysate (LAL) in medical safety testing.

Today, with safe and effective synthetic alternatives widely available, we have a clear opportunity to return the favor—by reducing our reliance on horseshoe crabs and supporting their recovery in the wild.

H.5266 reflects this transition and helps create the conditions for the recovery of horseshoe crabs and the coastal ecosystems that depend on them.

## ◆ Next Steps: Help Keep the Momentum Going

Horseshoe crabs still need your help. H.5266 has advanced to the Massachusetts House Committee on Ways and Means, and thoughtful outreach can help ensure the bill continues moving forward.

**Please consider sending a brief letter or email expressing your support for H.5266 to:**

- Chair Aaron Michlewitz — [Aaron.M.Michlewitz@mahouse.gov](mailto:Aaron.M.Michlewitz@mahouse.gov)
- Assistant Vice Chair Kip A. Diggs — [Kip.Diggs@mahouse.gov](mailto:Kip.Diggs@mahouse.gov)
- Legislative Director Tim Sheridan — [Tim.Sheridan@mahouse.gov](mailto:Tim.Sheridan@mahouse.gov)

(Please copy and paste the email addresses directly into your email.)

If you have a personal or professional connection to a member of the Ways and Means Committee—especially those who previously supported H.898—your outreach may be particularly influential.

If you contact any legislators or staff, please copy me or email me at [sharl@horseshoecrabs.org](mailto:sharl@horseshoecrabs.org) or by replying to this message. (Please copy and paste the address into your email.)

### House Committee on Ways and Means Members

\*\* Indicates legislators who co-sponsored H.898 and may be especially receptive to hearing from constituents and supporters.

- Shirley B. Arriaga — [Shirley.Arriaga@mahouse.gov](mailto:Shirley.Arriaga@mahouse.gov)
- David Biele — [David.Biele@mahouse.gov](mailto:David.Biele@mahouse.gov)
- Manny Cruz — [Manny.Cruz@mahouse.gov](mailto:Manny.Cruz@mahouse.gov)
- Patricia A. Duffy — [Patricia.Duffy@mahouse.gov](mailto:Patricia.Duffy@mahouse.gov)

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## ◆ Talking Points — Use Any or All

**Need help writing your comments? Look below for a template to get started.**

1. **Legislative Leadership**— The Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources has demonstrated strong leadership by strengthening this bill in line with current science and regional policy trends. Urge your legislator to build on this leadership and support H.5266 as it moves forward.
2. **Phase Out All Harvesting**— As strengthened, **H.5266 phases out the harvesting of horseshoe crabs for both bait and biomedical use.** This approach provides a

- clear, responsible transition while reducing pressure on wild populations.
3. **A Practical Transition**— Phasing out harvesting allows time for adjustment while moving toward more sustainable practices. For the bait fishery, alternatives are available; for biomedical use, synthetic substitutes are increasingly standard.
  4. **Transition to Synthetic Alternatives**— With readily available, more effective synthetic alternatives approved by the FDA, there's no longer a need to bleed horseshoe crabs in Massachusetts. The minute demand for assays not appropriate for synthetic alternatives can easily be met in other states. Eli Lilly, one of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies, has already replaced 80% of its horseshoe crab blood-based assays with synthetics.
  5. **Protect a Keystone Species**— Horseshoe crabs support coastal ecosystems, including migratory shorebirds whose populations are imperiled. Protecting regional leadership States like Connecticut and New York are already acting. Massachusetts has a clear opportunity to align with regional efforts and help lead a coordinated approach to coastal recovery.
  6. **Regional Leadership**— States like Connecticut and New York are already acting, and Massachusetts is falling behind. Massachusetts has a clear opportunity to align with regional efforts and help lead a coordinated approach to coastal recovery.

## ◆ Strong Support for H.5266 (formerly H.898)

The excerpts below represent a small sample of the many letters submitted by scientists, conservation leaders, and community members in support of this legislation.

### **American Bird Conservancy (ABC)**

*"There are bait alternatives to horseshoe crabs and synthetically-derived medical safety tests that do not require the harvest and bleeding of horseshoe crabs."*

→ [Read full letter](#)

### **Center for Biological Diversity**

*"Phase out the biomedical bleeding harvest. Rather than increase the biomedical bleeding harvest, DMF should gradually decrease the harvest toward an eventual phase out. Experience shows this is feasible and practicable—harvesting horseshoe crabs for biomedical bleeding purposes is currently prohibited in Connecticut and phasing out in New York. See Conn. House Bill No. 6484, Public Act No. 26-3 (effective Oct. 1, 2023); N.Y. C.L.S. Env'tl. Conserv. L. § 13-0331. ...If Connecticut and New York find it feasible and practicable to phase out the horseshoe crab biomedical bleeding harvest, so should Massachusetts."*

→ [Read full letter \(395 pages\)](#)

### **Dr. Eric Chivian, M.D. Editor of Sustaining Life: How Human Health Depends on Biodiversity**

*"It's hard to imagine how Massachusetts could sanction using an animal that takes 10 to 12 years*

*to reach maturity as bait...Synthetic alternatives to the horseshoe crab blood assay are on the market, and major pharmaceutical companies are adopting them...There's no need to take so many for blood when synthetic alternatives are available and no reason to take any horseshoe crabs for bait."*

→ [Read full letter](#)

### **Conservation Law Foundation**

*"There is no need to permit—let alone increase—the harvest of horseshoe crabs for biomedical use as non-animal derived alternatives can replace reliance on LAL from horseshoe crab blood...The U.S. Pharmacopeia Microbiology Expert Committee, which includes eight U.S. Food and Drug Administration representatives, authorized non-animal derived reagents for use in endotoxin testing in 2024"*

→ [Read full letter](#)

### **Horseshoe Crab Recovery Coalition**

*"Massachusetts is home to some of the same companies whose research has proven that we no longer need horseshoe crab blood to ensure patient safety. In effect, the bleeding companies are marketing the animal-derived agent side-by-side with the newer animal-free alternatives. Synthetic endotoxin tests are recognized by the US Pharmacopeia as equivalent and are currently used in at least 10 FDA approved medicines including treatments for diabetes, obesity, COVID-19 and other sterile medicines and vaccines. Given the strong biopharmaceutical presence in Massachusetts, the state should be working to accelerate the transition – not give the bleeding industry the freedom to operate with relaxed limits."*

→ [Read full letter](#)

### **Friends of Animals**

*"We led the efforts here [Connecticut] to ban the killing of horseshoe crabs for bait or biomedical purposes—it passed in 2023. Similar legislation passed the NY State Legislature this summer."*

→ [Read full letter](#)

### **The International Conservation Fund**

*"With widely available, more effective synthetic alternatives accepted by the by the US and European Pharmaceopeias, there is no longer any reason to bleed horseshoe crabs to make assays to test for endotoxin contamination in injected drugs and vaccines."*

→ [Read full letter](#)

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## ◆ **The Shift Is Underway**

- [There Is a Better Way](#) As highlighted by **The Boston Globe (Feb. 10, 2026)**, "*Eli Lilly has already transitioned 80 percent of its safety testing to synthetic alternatives. That's largely thanks to Jay Bolden, a senior director at the company and dedicated birder who knew how migratory shorebirds rely on the crabs for food. He said*

*switching away from crab blood made sense from an ethical and ecosystem perspective. It also reduced the supply chain risk of relying on a wild animal and saved the company money."*

- **[New York Bans Commercial Horseshoe Crab Harvests](#) Center for Biological Diversity, 2025.** *"Gov. Kathy Hochul has signed the Horseshoe Crab Protection Act, which will phase out commercial harvests of horseshoe crabs from New York waters over a three-year transition period...The legislation requires a 25% reduction in harvests over the next three years, with a full prohibition beginning in 2029. **New York joins New Jersey and Connecticut as states that have banned horseshoe crab harvests, and other states are considering similar measures."***
- **[New Law Aims to Increase Horseshoe Crab Populations](#) National Audubon Society, 2023.** *"Unfortunately, the number of horseshoe crabs in Long Island Sound and throughout the Atlantic Coast has been severely depleted in recent years, raising concerns that this ancient species that has been around longer than the dinosaurs could be driven into extinction from overharvesting," **Governor Lamont said, as he celebrated the passage of legislation banning horseshoe crab harvests in Connecticut.***
- **[Artificial bait helps horseshoe crabs, birds, fishermen](#) University of Delaware Research, 2021.** *"By substituting an invasive species, the Asian shore crab, the researchers cut that amount down to as little as one-sixteenth of a horseshoe crab...despite speculation that female horseshoe crabs were better baits than males, the scientists found that artificial baits composed of males or females were equally effective...LaMonica Fine Foods in Millville, N.J., has started producing the bait commercially. Field tests in Delaware Bay with local whelk fishermen have been successful so far."*

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## ◆ Letter to Legislators Template: Support H.5266

**Subject: Please Support H.5266**

Dear [Representatives Last Names],

I am writing to express my support for H.5266, An Act to End the Use of Horseshoe Crabs for Bait. *[If you are a constituent of any member of the House Committee on Ways and Means receiving this message, please add this line: I am a constituent of Representative [Name] and reside in [Town/City].*

This bill reflects an important shift toward protecting horseshoe crabs at a time when the whelk fishery can significantly reduce the number of horseshoe crabs used for bait by partially replacing them with invasive green crabs and shellfish-based baits already in use, and the pharmaceutical

industry is adopting synthetic substitutes that reduce reliance on horseshoe crab blood.

Together, these advances make it both feasible and responsible to move away from the use of horseshoe crabs. The bill also aligns Massachusetts with regional efforts to restore coastal ecosystems and strengthen long-term resilience.

[Add a brief personal note about why this issue matters to you—your community, work, or experience.]

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Address]

[Your Email --optional]

**Emphasize that the bill:**

- Advances biodiversity protection and strengthens coastal resilience
- Aligns Massachusetts with regional leaders such as New York and Connecticut
- Is supported by scientists, conservation organizations, and hundreds of residents

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**Again, if you contact any of these legislators, please copy me at [sharl@horseshoecrabs.org](mailto:sharl@horseshoecrabs.org) (please copy and paste into your email) or reply to this message to let me know.**

Thank you for your continued efforts on behalf of horseshoe crabs.

*Sharl Heller*