

June 3, 2019

Dear Conferees:

The Green Budget Coalition, representing over 30 statewide and regional environmental and conservation organizations from around the Commonwealth, has been advocating for adequate funding for our environmental agencies for more than two decades. We greatly appreciate that both the House and Senate included increases for the Coalition's priorities during the budget process. However, we still have a long way to go to reverse the deep cuts to our environmental agencies over the past decade and to reach our goal of 1% of the budget for the environment.

To that end, the Coalition requests that the conference committee adopt the following numbers for the final budget:

Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR): State Parks & Recreation (Line-Item: 2810-0100)

Support the level in the House budget: \$45,736,288

This line-item supports the stewardship, management and safety of our parks, parkways, beaches, forests, pools, skating rinks, and campgrounds. DCR is responsible for 450,000 acres of land, spread across more than 250 properties. Over the past few years DCR's presence at properties around the state has noticeably declined, with only two rangers covering the entire Berkshires. The House funding level would ensure that our parks, campgrounds, and beaches are staffed and safe, facilities and trails are maintained, and DCR can better steward the amazing array of natural resources found on these properties. The increase proposed by the House is urgently needed to ensure the public's enjoyment of all that DCR properties have to offer.

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) (Line-Item: 2200-0100)

Support the underlying number in both the House & Senate budgets: \$31,505,245 (with earmarks \$31,832,245 and \$31,922,245 respectively)

DEP has a broad set of critical responsibilities for public health and safety, including ensuring clean air and water, watershed planning and permitting, the safe management of toxic chemicals, enforcing environmental laws, reducing solid waste, the timely cleanup of hazardous waste sites and spills, and the preservation of wetlands and coastal resources. The agency lost more than 100 employees during the Early Retirement Incentive Program and this funding is needed so DEP can continue to replace critical staff.

Division of Ecological Restoration (Line-Item: 2300-0101)

Support the level in the Senate budget: \$2,100,000

There are 3,000 dams and 30,000 culverts across the state, many of which have long-exceeded their design life and are vulnerable to increasing threats from severe storms and flooding. Many communities lack the technical and financial capacity to address this legacy infrastructure that impacts environmental health, public safety, municipal budgets, and community resilience to climate change. Requests for DER's assistance to remove old dams, upgrade substandard culverts, and complete other restoration actions far exceed the Division's current resources. The Senate's increase will allow DER to assist more communities and take on additional critical projects each year.

Our final priority was funded at the same level in both budgets, and we hope to maintain that number in the final budget:

DCR: Office of Watershed Management (Line-Item: 2800-0101)

House & Senate: \$1,523,447

This office is responsible for providing invaluable technical assistance to municipalities, working with nearly every city and town in the Commonwealth. The increase in both budgets would allow the Office of Watershed Management to hire back staff that had to be cut as a result of fewer funds, including a Flood Hazard Management Program Mapping Coordinator and a Water Resources Scientist.

Please contact Casey Bowers, Legislative Director, Environmental League of Massachusetts, cbowers@environmentalleague.org, or 781-771-5404 if you have any questions.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

GREEN BUDGET COALITION

Appalachian Mountain Club
Environmental League of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Audubon Society
Massachusetts Organization of State Engineers
& Scientists
Massachusetts Rivers Alliance
The Nature Conservancy in Massachusetts
Arborway Coalition
Association to Preserve Cape Cod
Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT)
Charles River Watershed Association
Clean Water Action
Climate Action Business Association
Environment Massachusetts
Franklin Park Coalition
Friends of Alewife Reservation
Green Newton

Kestrel Land Trust
LivableStreets Alliance
Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust
Project Green Schools
Massachusetts Association of Conservation
Commissions
Massachusetts Climate Action Network
Massachusetts Farm to School
Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition
Massachusetts Sierra Club
Merrimack River Watershed Council (MRWC)
Mystic River Watershed Association
Nashua River Watershed Association
OARS: For the Assabet, Sudbury and Concord
River
The Trustees
Wastewater Advisory Committee to the MWRA