

Senate Committee on Ways and Means
24 Beacon St.
Room 212
Boston, MA 02133

House Committee on Ways and Means
24 Beacon St.
Room 243
Boston, MA 02133

March 2, 2022

Chair Rodrigues, Chair Michlewitz, Vice Chair Friedman, and Vice Chair Ferrante and members of the Committees,

On behalf of the 33 undersigned organizations, we urge you to retain the \$150 million proposed funding for climate resilience in H.4479, *An Act making appropriations for Fiscal Year 2022 to provide for supplementing certain existing appropriations and for certain other activities and projects.*

As organizations working in the field on climate mitigation and adaptation, we see the significant burden that climate change is putting on our communities, and the many solutions available to us that protect both our people and our planet. **This supplemental budget is a clear indication of the state's commitment to advancing those solutions.**

A \$150 million investment in climate resilience is an important next step for Massachusetts. This funding would build on work already completed by municipalities, state agencies, and non-profit partners, and serve as a crucial infusion to implement projects statewide to help mitigate the impacts of extreme flooding, increased temperatures, and vulnerable wildlife populations.

Line item 2000-1014 in this bill would provide funding for:

- 27 dam removal projects
- 22 culvert replacements or repairs
- Dozens of new or improved recreational facilities, and
- Increased stormwater management

Please refer to the map below to see the statewide distribution of these projects.

Funding 27 dam removals in this bill would be the largest one-time investment in aquatic ecosystems in recent state history. Massachusetts has 3,000 small dams, including 328 that are considered “potentially high hazard,” according to the US Army’s National Inventory of Dams.¹ Removing them is a lasting and effective strategy to protect neighborhoods from flooding, restore aquatic ecosystems for wildlife, and improve water quality.

We are thrilled to see this bill provide over \$40M in funding for Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program grants. Due to the program’s tremendous popularity, many innovative projects have been left waiting for funding: in the latest grant round, the state received applications for \$28 million for action grants, but only had \$10 million available to distribute. This supplemental budget will support those projects, making Massachusetts more resilient one town at a time.

Finally, we appreciate that the bill includes language allowing non-profit organizations, such as land trusts and watershed associations, to serve as lawful grantees for the MVP program. Conservation groups have been committed partners for many MVP grants thus far, especially in under-resourced communities where municipalities lack capacity to apply on their own. Allowing these groups to be grantees will expedite resilience planning across the commonwealth and allow a wider array of environmental professionals to engage with the MVP program.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to making Massachusetts climate resilient. Please contact Katharine Lange at Massachusetts Rivers Alliance for additional information.

Sincerely,

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Massachusetts Rivers Alliance

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Map of climate resilience projects to be funded through line item 2000-1014 in H.4479:

