

June 10, 2016

RE: Green Budget Recommendations for the FY2017 Budget Conference Committee

Senators Spilka, DiDomenico, and deMacedo  
Representatives Dempsey, Kulik, and Smola

Dear FY17 Budget Conference Committee Members:

Thank you for your leadership and the hard work of the Committees and staff to produce the Fiscal Year 2017 budget.

**The 75+ undersigned conservation and environmental organizations are writing to urge your support of funding for critical environmental agencies and programs as you finalize the operating budget.** While state spending continues to increase overall, we aspire to our goal of devoting 1 percent of the state operating budget to critical programs that protect the environment and public health. In addition, we know that it is critical that we maintain our natural assets if we want to retain and attract new businesses and jobs to the Commonwealth. We therefore ask that you support the following line items at the budget levels suggested below.

\*\*\*Top Priorities\*\*\*

**Climate Change Adaptation & Preparedness (2000-0101) - Support funding level in the Senate budget: \$250,000**

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) is responsible for ensuring the Commonwealth can respond to impacts from climate change and improve our resiliency. Funding will support municipal assistance, improved data collection and analysis of vulnerabilities, and integrated planning to protect our transportation, energy and water infrastructure and public health. The investment we recommend will support interagency communication and coordination and the creation of a climate preparedness plan. The Senate's amount would return this important funding to 83 percent of the FY2016 level.

**Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Administration (2200-0100) - Support funding level in the Senate budget: \$25,627,967**

The Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) has a broad set of critical responsibilities for public health and safety, including ensuring clean air and water, managing toxics, reducing solid waste, preserving wetlands and coastal resources, developing energy efficiency projects, and preparing for the impacts of climate change. Overall, DEP's staffing is down 30% compared to FY2008. Substantial budget cuts and staff reductions are obstacles to

MassDEP's ability to lead statewide planning, issue permits in a timely fashion, provide technical assistance, perform water quality monitoring, conduct inspections, and enforce state law. The Senate's higher funding level would return this line-item to 87 percent of its FY2016 funding.

**Department of Conservation and Recreation**

**State Parks and Recreation (2810-0100) - Support at the funding level in the Senate budget: \$40,076,430**

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is responsible for the stewardship of over 450,000 acres of land which includes parks, beaches, forests, pools, golf courses, skating rinks and campgrounds. Recently, DCR has been able to re-open and re-staff a few properties, but a continued shortfall in funding will leave many properties closed and understaffed. Since FY2009, funding for this line-item has been reduced by \$10.6M (19 percent). Restored funding would help provide for open, staffed, well-maintained facilities which support the Commonwealth's \$10B outdoor recreation economy. The Senate's higher amount would bring this line-item to 86 percent of its FY2016 level.

\*\*\*Additional Requests\*\*\*

**Office of the State Climatologist (2000-1207) - Support at the funding level in the Senate budget: \$150,000**

Despite previous allocations of funding for this position, Massachusetts has yet to have a State Climatologist because the funding has been eliminated repeatedly before the position could be filled. Massachusetts is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and we need to be making science-based decisions and taking pro-active measures in order to avoid billions of dollars of damage, negative health impacts and pre-mature death. The Office of the State Climatologist will serve the Commonwealth as a clearinghouse for accurate climate information and would also critical expertise specific to our state for use by government officials and other key decision makers locally, nationally and abroad. Policy makers, businesses, farmers, and industry could rely on the Office of the State Climatologist to monitor, conduct research, and issue reports on the Massachusetts climate relevant to data uses and decision-makers.

**Division of Ecological Restoration (2300-0101) - Support at the funding level in the Senate budget: \$673,525**

The Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) within the Department of Fish and Game is responsible for protecting our rivers, wetlands, and watersheds to improve stream flow, protect drinking water, reduce flooding, and restore habitats. For every \$1 million spent on restoration, the average economic output of DER projects generates a 75% return on investment and creates or maintains 12.5 full-time-equivalent jobs. Every dollar the state invests in Division of Ecological Restoration projects is matched by seven non-state dollars (i.e., from federal and

private grants). The small increase provided in the FY2017 budget would enable DER to rely less on capital funds for staffing, freeing up capital funds for additional projects.

**Department of Agricultural Resources Administration (2511-0100) - Support at the funding level in the House budget: \$5,729,746**

Massachusetts has a well-established agricultural sector with over 7,700 farms, 524,000 acres of farmland, and 61,000 jobs. With more than 30 programs and services, the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources helps consumers find local food and farm products and expands access to healthy, local food in communities where nutritious food options are limited. The House amount would restore this line-item to 95 percent of its FY2016 funding level. We support the House's inclusion of a Farmland Protection and Viability Advisory Commission. Despite Massachusetts' long history of leadership in farmland protection, the Commonwealth lacks relevant goals and benchmarks against which to measure progress. The Farmland Protection Advisory Commission would implement a key recommendation of the Massachusetts Food Plan by creating a farmland action plan to develop an inventory of farmland and review existing programs for farmland protection and farm viability, as well as establish measurable statewide goals and benchmarks related to farmland conversion, farmland protection, and farmland access.

**DCR Watershed Management (2800-0101) - Support at the funding level in the Senate budget: \$969,975**

This program manages the drinking water supply for approximately 2.5 million residents of Massachusetts. Staff are responsible for ensuring access to lakes, ponds and rivers that are healthy and free of invasive species. This office provides scientific information, policy guidance, technical assistance, and resource management. The amount in the Senate budget would return this program to 87 percent of the FY2016 level.

**Community Preservation Act- Transfer of Consolidated Net Surplus Funds from the FY2016 Budget to Community Preservation Trust Fund**

We are pleased that both the House and Senate allocated \$10M from the state's FY2016 budget surplus, if available, to the Community Preservation Trust Fund.

Thank you for your time and consideration. **We urge you to include the higher funding levels in our letter to put us on the path to restoring Massachusetts environmental agencies and programs.** Please contact Erica Mattison at the Environmental League of Massachusetts at 617-742-2553 or [emattison@environmentalleague.org](mailto:emattison@environmentalleague.org) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

**The Green Budget Coalition**

See reverse for signatories

Environmental League of Massachusetts  
American Farmland Trust  
Appalachian Mountain Club  
Arborway Coalition  
Association to Preserve Cape Cod  
Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT)  
Berkshire Grown  
Boston Cyclists Union  
Boston Harbor Now  
Boston Park Advocates  
Brookline GreenSpace Alliance  
Buzzards Bay Coalition  
Charles River Conservancy  
Charles River Watershed Association  
Clean Water Action  
Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA)  
Connecticut River Watershed Council  
Conservation Law Foundation  
East Quabbin Land Trust  
Emerald Necklace Conservancy  
Environment Massachusetts  
Environmental Business Council  
Esplanade Association  
Essex County Greenbelt Association  
Franklin Land Trust  
Franklin Park Coalition  
Friends of Pontoosuc Lake  
Friends of the Blue Hills  
Friends of Upton State Forest  
Green Newton  
Home Energy Efficiency Team (HEET)  
Hoosic River Watershed Association  
Ipswich River Watershed Association  
Kestrel Land Trust  
Lakes and Ponds of Western Massachusetts  
LivableStreets Alliance  
Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust  
Mass Audubon  
Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions  
Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition  
Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition

Massachusetts Climate Action Network  
Massachusetts Congress of Lake and Pond Associations  
Massachusetts Farm to School  
Massachusetts Forest and Park Friends Network  
Massachusetts Horticultural Society  
Massachusetts Interfaith Power & Light  
Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition  
Massachusetts League of Environmental Voters  
Massachusetts Organization of State Engineers and Scientists  
Massachusetts PipeLine Awareness Network (MassPLAN)  
Massachusetts Rivers Alliance  
Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance  
Massachusetts Society of Municipal Conservation Professionals  
Massachusetts Watershed Coalition  
Merrimack River Watershed Council  
Millers River Watershed Council  
Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust  
Mystic River Watershed Association  
Nashua River Watershed Association  
Neponset River Watershed Association  
New England Mountain Bike Association  
New England Wild Flower Society  
North and South Rivers Watershed Association  
OARS - For the Assabet, Sudbury, and Concord Rivers  
Parker River Clean Water Association  
Sea Run Brook Trout Coalition  
Sheffield Land Trust  
Southeastern Massachusetts Pine Barrens Alliance  
Sudbury Valley Trustees  
The Nature Conservancy  
The Trust for Public Land  
The Trustees of Reservations  
Toxics Action Center Campaigns  
Trout Unlimited - Greater Boston Chapter  
US Green Building Council - Massachusetts Chapter  
WalkBoston  
Western Massachusetts Public Lands Alliance  
Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation

Cc: Secretary Matthew Beaton  
Undersecretary Ned Bartlett  
Ms. Stolle Singleton