



June 5, 2025

The Honorable Aaron M. Michlewitz
Chair, House Committee on Ways &
Means
State House Room 243

The Honorable Michael J. Rodrigues
Chair, Senate Committee on Ways &
Means
State House Room 212

The Honorable Ann-Margaret Ferrante
Vice Chair, House Committee on Ways &
Means
State House Room 238

The Honorable Joanne M. Comerford
Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Ways &
Means
State House Room 410

The Honorable Todd M. Smola
Ranking Minority, House Committee on
Ways & Means
State House Room 124

The Honorable Patrick M. O'Connor
Ranking Minority, Senate Committee on
Ways & Means
State House Room 419

Green Budget Coalition FY26 Conference Priorities

Dear Chair Michlewitz, Chair Rodrigues, and Honorable Members of the Conference Committee:

Thank you for your leadership and hard work as you work together to craft a final Fiscal Year 2026 budget that reflects the key spending priorities and critical needs of the Commonwealth in a challenging fiscal environment. As members of the Green Budget Coalition, we advocate for robust, sustainable state funding to meet the scope and scale of our climate, conservation, and adaptation challenges.

We respectfully request your support for the following items for inclusion in the final budget at the levels recommended:

Office of Environmental Justice and Equity (2000-0102): \$8,292,156

The state's EJ office provides critical support for all EEA agencies to ensure that decisions are being made with best practices for community engagement and assessment of project impacts. Following the passage of the 2024 clean energy law, the EJ office will also continue to play an expanded role in crafting and implementing the siting and permitting reforms required under the legislation.

Department of Public Utilities (2100-0012): \$19,317,626

DPU plays an essential role in facilitating an equitable, affordable energy transition, and its statutory obligations have only grown following the passage of the 2024 siting and permitting reforms. State oversight of utility work and energy infrastructure projects is essential to ensuring that ratepayer dollars are invested wisely and in alignment with the Commonwealth's goals. Because the proposed



funding level for FY26 is lower than the FY25 appropriation, ratepayers will not see a net impact from this line item.

Department of Fish and Game (2300-0100): \$2,694,288

DFG continues to play an essential role in land conservation, endangered species protection, and implementation of “blue carbon” restoration projects. The technical and scientific expertise housed at DFG helps to ensure that sensitive natural communities and land of high ecological value is identified and responsibly managed statewide. The Department will also take on a critical implementation role as the state rolls out its final biodiversity targets, hiring staff to develop guidance and programming to support this new statewide framework.

Division of Ecological Restoration (2300-0101): \$5,343,523

DER projects that restore riverways, wetlands, and coasts remain popular and in high demand, and the multiyear effort to staff up this small but important Division has resulted in a reduction, but not elimination, of project backlogs. At any given time, DER has roughly 40 projects underway, and year-over-year continuity in funding will help to ensure that the Division can meet project timelines to help communities enhance safety and avoid costs by reducing flooding and restoring natural systems.

DCR State Parks and Recreation (2810-0100): \$113,795,049

DCR continues to slowly but steadily increase its workforce and reduce deferred maintenance backlogs at its properties while preparing state-owned land for future climate impacts. The Department also plays an important role in ensuring equitable access to the outdoors, as roughly a quarter of its properties are located in environmental justice communities. While DCR has received increases to its operating account in recent years, its staffing levels remain well below the statutory target established in the FY25 budget.

Department of Energy Resources (7006-1003): \$7,919,402

Under the 2024 clean energy law, DOER is tasked with creating a new Division of Clean Energy Siting and Permitting. This division will play an essential role in developing and providing guidance for municipalities, project developers, and community stakeholders for both large and small clean energy projects, ensuring that proposals are carefully crafted to mitigate potential harms and ensure community benefits. The impacts of the proposed increase to ratepayers are marginal (roughly 25 cents per ratepayer per year on average) and help to drive down costs by reducing uncertainty and accelerating timelines for clean energy infrastructure projects.



Thank you for your consideration of these important priorities and for your tireless ongoing work to finalize the FY26 budget. Please contact David Melly at dmelly@environmentalleague.org or (617) 650-5024 with any questions or requests for additional information.

Sincerely,

The Green Budget Coalition

Appalachian Mountain Club
Charles River Watershed Association
Environmental League of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Association of Conservation Coalitions
Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition
Massachusetts Organization of State Engineers and Scientists
Massachusetts Rivers Alliance
MassAudubon
The Nature Conservancy of Massachusetts
The Trustees