



#1485, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

filed by Rep. Sabadosa | Green Budget Priority

Request: Fund the Energy and Environmental Affairs administrative line item (2000-0100) at \$20,898,482 (\$200,000 increase over FY25).

Overview

- EEA's Executive Office is responsible for coordinating and implementing strategies for climate change adaptation and preparedness including the resiliency of the Commonwealth's transportation, energy and public health infrastructures; built environments; municipal assistance; improved data collection, analysis, and planning; and improved resiliency through the strengthening and revitalization of natural resources.
- EEA is the central hub for managing the implementation of the [ResilientMass](#) plan, an interagency effort that also engages MassDOT, the Executive Office of Administration and Finance, and the Office of Climate Innovation and Resilience. The ResilientMass Plan identifies strategies and specific, measurable actions to address environmental risks to the human health and safety, communities, critical assets and infrastructure, natural resources, governance, and the economy.
- In 2024, EEA's Climate Team launched the Community Climate Advisory Council comprised of 35 members representing municipalities, regional planning agencies, and community organizations from every region across the state working on local climate initiatives.
- EEA also works with the Office of Environmental Justice (2000-0102) to coordinate agency-wide integration of EJ principles and practices into state agency work. For the first time, in 2024, all EEA agencies now have a designated EJ coordinator to support agency-specific work and language access.
- As part of the Forests as Climate Solutions Initiative, EEA is allocated \$50 million in 2024 to advance forest conservation, incent municipal and private landowners to adopt climate-oriented management approaches, and support local economies. EEA's Division of Conservation Services also awarded over \$5 million in grants to ten land trust organizations and municipalities for new forest reserves. These forests will mitigate climate change impacts by sequestering and storing carbon as well as supporting biodiversity.

Examples of Need

- Interconnection, expansion, and access to the state's trail network has long been a patchwork of local and state agency work without central coordination. This recommendation includes funding for a new interagency trails coordinator position, housed within EEA, that would act as a liaison between DCR, MassDOT, municipalities, regional planning agencies, and local landowners to accelerate implementation of the [MassTrails Priority Trails Network Vision](#).
- The state's [Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness](#) (MVP) program is a popular and growing program which has awarded \$100 million in planning and action grants related to climate resiliency and preparedness to 341 MA cities and towns. All of the funding for regional MVP coordinators falls under the CAMP line item.
- EEA staff oversee the development and execution of the energy and environmental affairs-related programs under the state's capital plan, which covers over \$300 million in annual investments overall. Three of the central EEA programs - the ResilientMass plan, the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program, and the ResilientCoasts initiative - collectively manage over \$65 million in spending each year.



#1448, Department of Environmental Protection

filed by Rep. Dave Rogers | Green Budget Priority

Request: Fund the Department of Environmental Protection administrative line item (2200-0100) at \$54,359,482 (level funding with FY25).

Overview

- MassDEP 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 toxics, enforcing environmental laws, reducing solid waste, the timely cleanup of hazardous waste sites and spills, and the preservation of wetlands and coastal resources.
- MassDEP was one of the hardest-hit state agencies by staff cuts and early retirements and has still not returned to pre-2008 staffing levels. At the same time, the Department has new statutory obligations that include:
 - The integration of environmental justice principles and cumulative impact analysis into [air quality permitting](#);
 - Implementation of the recommendations of the [PFAS Interagency Task Force](#); and
 - Development of a statewide [Clean Heat Standard](#) to meet the Commonwealth's emissions reduction goals from the building sector.
- The administrative line item is the primary funding source supporting MassDEP's permitting, compliance, enforcement, and disbursement of funding. Through Massachusetts's State Revolving Fund, MassDEP has authorized nearly \$510M in funding in 2024 to fund 125 water-related projects, including lead pipe replacement and PFAS mitigation.
- In FY24 and FY25, MassDEP received a significant increase in funding to support new staff for climate resilience planning, PFAS testing and technical support, and administration of new and existing grant programs. The Department made a strong recruitment and hiring push to ensure that this funding increase could quickly increase staff capacity and has grown by roughly 100 positions in the last two fiscal years, while managing the loss of institutional knowledge from a high retirement rate.

Examples of Need

- MassDEP is in the process of updating all its stormwater and wetlands regulations to include climate adaptation, preparedness, and resilience measures and best practices in an initiative known as "[Climate Resilience 1.0](#)." These regulations are a major first step in increasing climate resilience via wetlands and waterways permitting.
- MassDEP manages a number of programs related to electric vehicle deployment, including the [MassEVIP program](#) and the [Low-Emission Vehicles](#) program. As new threats to regional efforts to support transportation-related emissions reduction emerge, ensuring the Department has the capacity to provide guidance and support to municipalities and commercial operators in Massachusetts looking to purchase new EVs and deploy related infrastructure is essential.
- In the face of federal threats to clean water standards, empowering MassDEP staff to continue enforcing strong public health standards for PFAS contamination will be more essential than ever before. Hundreds of public water systems across the Commonwealth already have identified PFAS levels that exceed safe levels, and municipalities look to state and federal agencies for monitoring support and technical assistance.



#422, DCR State Parks and Recreation

filed by Rep. Barber | Green Budget Priority

Request: Fund Department of Conservation and Recreation State Parks and Recreation line item (2810-0100) at \$112,563,143 (\$2,518,583 increase over FY25).

Overview

- DCR is responsible for the stewardship, management, and safety of our parks, beaches, forests, pools, skating rinks, and campgrounds including:
 - 450,000 acres of land across over 250 properties and nearly 2,000 miles of trails;
 - Habitat for 291 state-listed rare species, including 8 species found only on DCR land; and
 - Forests that protect drinking water supplies to support millions of residents.
- DCR properties are a cornerstone of the state's [\\$13 billion outdoor recreation economy](#), which supports over 100,000 jobs across the state and grew by 13% from 2022 to 2023, the fastest rate of any state in the country.
- Aligning conservation actions with state's 2030 and 2050 emissions targets was a central recommendation of the DCR Special Commission. As the primary steward of public lands, DCR has a valuable role to play in meeting emissions targets, and while the state agency is a participant in ongoing work around Natural and Working Lands, it does not have a comprehensive standalone plan for its role in meeting the state's climate goals.
- DCR currently has approximately 1,000 full-time equivalent staff (FTEs), an increase from past years but still below the 2008 level of 1,279. The FY24 budget included language raising the department's staffing cap to 1,300, but did not include funding to support that hiring level.
- DCR continues to move staff carried on its capital budgets over to operating budget, which in turn frees up capital dollars to address the department's billion-dollar deferred maintenance backlog, but the need to properly allocate funding slows overall growth of DCR staff capacity, particularly for full-time non-seasonal staff.

Examples of Need

- In the last two fiscal years, funding increases have enabled DCR to add 120 staff. However, additional funding would be necessary to meet the legislative goal of 1,300 FTEs, which at current rates would require roughly four more years of sustained growth for the department.
- DCR estimates that 981 of the 3,996 building facilities it owns are located in EJ communities, roughly 25% of its total assets. One of the four core components of the Department's [EJ strategy](#) is to "prioritize and evaluate investments and allocation of resources to serve EJ populations."



\$689, Department of Energy Resources

filed by Rep. Owens | Green Budget Priority

Request: Fund the Department of Energy Resources assessment line item (7006-1003) at \$8,919,402 (H.1 recommendation, \$2,260,065 increase over FY25).

Overview

- DOER primary energy policy agency for the Commonwealth. The Department is the central source of policy guidance, funding, and regulation for individuals, organizations, and communities to support progress toward local and statewide clean energy goals.
- Until 2024, DOER consisted of five Divisions (Energy Efficiency, Policy, Green Communities, Leading by Example, and Renewables) responsible for implementing different components of the state's energy policy. The siting and permitting reforms passed in the 2024 clean energy law also require the Department to establish a new Clean Energy Siting and Permitting Division to develop guidance for municipalities and developers seeking to get new projects approved.
- The state's Green Communities Program serves [297 cities and towns](#) across Massachusetts, providing grants and technical assistance for municipal energy efficiency and emissions reduction projects. In 2025, DOER will also announce the first round of [Climate Leader Communities](#), a higher level of Green Communities designation focused on decarbonization and deployment of clean energy.
- DOER's funding through this line item comes from an assessment on utilities [legislatively authorized](#) to finance state programs for energy efficiency, conservation, and demand reduction. Because this item is an assessment, increases do not pull revenue directly from the General Fund, but the existing statutory language is somewhat limited and does not reflect DOER's current roles and responsibilities.

Examples of Need

- The Governor's budget recommendation envisions using the bulk of new funding to hire 20 new staff for the new Division of Clean Energy Siting and Permitting to develop and provide standards, regulations, and guidance for new reforms to the siting and permitting of clean energy. Small-scale clean energy projects expected to pass through the new expedited municipal permitting process will rely on regulations developed by this Division.
- Ongoing energy procurements, including offshore wind, are managed by DOER. The Renewables Division will also now be tasked with implementing the 2024 law which authorizes a new procurement of energy storage resources and multi-state coordination of energy procurement.
- The first round of applications for the Climate Leader Communities Program received 19 applications in December 2024, which are currently being reviewed with the goal of approving as many municipalities as possible for Climate Leader designation. Successful implementation and expansion of this program in 2025 will rely on staff capacity to manage demand and provide support for participants and potential new members.



#129, Division of Ecological Restoration

filed by Rep. Meschino | Green Budget Priority

Request: Fund the DFG Division of Ecological Restoration line item (2330-0100) at \$5,506,476 (level funding).

Overview

- DER has over 80 [active river and wetland projects](#) across the state, including dam removals, wetland restoration, culvert upgrades, urban river revitalization efforts, floodplain and streamflow restoration, and cranberry bog restoration. All DER projects work to restore healthy habitat and help communities adapt to climate change, while also generating significant economic benefits.
- DER staff guide restoration projects through design and permitting, thereby positioning projects for successful implementation through state, federal, and private funding programs.
- In 2023 (the most recent annual data available), project benefits included the restoration of 40 acres of wetlands and reconnection of over 300 miles of river, as well as supporting roughly \$11 million in related economic activity.
- 56% of active ecological restoration projects were located in a town with an environmental justice (EJ) population, and 30% were located directly in an EJ neighborhood.
- DER's technical assistance and project leadership is critical to helping communities carry out restoration and adaptation projects identified in Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness plans and to helping state agencies carry out many of the priority actions identified in the statewide [ResilientMass plan](#).
- Each of DER's project managers oversees 5-10 dam removal, culvert replacement, or wetland restoration projects, completing 1-3 projects every year. State investment through DER creates or sustains high-paying jobs in construction and engineering sectors (12.5 jobs per \$1 million spent).

Examples of Need

- Demand for project funding far exceeds capacity for most DER programs. In 2023, 71 municipalities applied for funding through the Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Program but only 14 were ultimately awarded funding.
- Roughly 4x as many ecological restoration projects are in planning, design, or permitting processes compared with projects in active construction. Year-over-year continuity in program funding and staff capacity is critical to ensure that projects already receiving public funding are successfully completed at a high rate.
- DER is looking to expand its successful [Regional Partnerships Program](#), which currently supports three regional coordination efforts to help non-profit organizations and regional planning agencies increase capacity for ecological restoration projects through financial and technical assistance, maximizing the ecological benefits of projects receiving funding. A new request for responses (RFR) for new projects is expected to launch this year.