

June 2, 2017

RE: Green Budget requests for FY18 Budget Conference Committee

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

Dear FY18 Budget Conference Committee Members:

Led by the Environmental League of Massachusetts, the Green Budget Coalition is comprised of over 100 organizations and businesses from around the Commonwealth. Our funding recommendations represent a small step toward 1% for the environment, a level of investment last achieved more than 15 years ago. By acting on our requests, the legislature can show that clean water, parks, healthy communities, and a strong economy are high priorities. At a time when federal funding for environmental protection and fighting climate change is in jeopardy, it is especially important for the state legislature to lead.

*****Top Two Priorities*****

MassDEP Administration (Line-Item 2200-0100)

Support the level in the Senate budget: \$26,025,000

Deep budget cuts and staff reductions in recent years have jeopardized MassDEP's ability to do its job. With staffing down by a stark 30%, MassDEP is experiencing the lowest staffing level in recent history. The agency is extremely limited in its ability to issue permits in a timely fashion, provide technical assistance, and enforce state laws that protect public health and our environment. From wetland and river protection to overseeing the cleanup of contaminated sites and mitigating climate change, MassDEP has critical responsibilities, but lacks the resources to fulfill them.

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

Support the level in the Senate budget: \$39,863,728

Across Massachusetts, residents have concerns about the inadequate availability, safety, and quality of parks, beaches, forests, pools, skating rinks, and campgrounds. Managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), staff presence at these properties has dropped off noticeably in recent years due to millions of dollars in budget reductions and an agency-wide staff reduction of 30%. For every \$1M, DCR can hire approximately 20 staff. DCR needs adequate funding and staffing in order to deliver properties that are open, staffed, and well-maintained, where laws are enforced and there are year-round programs. This agency is crucial for ensuring that people of all ages have close-to-home, affordable opportunities to connect with nature and take part in recreational activities. We strongly support having \$250,000 go toward an asset management modernization program and implementation pilot.

*****Additional Requests*****

Community Preservation Act

Support the funding increase in the Senate budget

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) helps communities preserve open space and historic sites, create community housing, and develop outdoor recreational facilities. CPA expands construction jobs for the Commonwealth's workforce, supports the tourism industry through preservation of historic and natural resources, and improves quality of life across the state. So far, 172 cities and towns have adopted CPA, resulting in approval for over 9,000 CPA projects. Nearly two-thirds of all state residents live in CPA communities. This one-time \$25 increase to the recording fees at the Registries of Deeds will create a higher state match, thereby restoring the annual contribution to previously funded levels.

Conservation Land Tax Credit

We support the Conservation Land Tax Credit adopted by the House that would (1) incrementally increase the annual cap from \$2M per year (\$3M in 2018; \$4M in 2019; \$5M in 2020); (2) allow Realty Trusts to be eligible (one-third of Massachusetts land trusts are Realty Trusts); and, provide a ten-year sunset (although we prefer no sunset). The tax credit is a highly effective conservation tool that helps land trusts protect the Commonwealth's most critical natural resources. Every \$1 of state tax credits leverages approximately \$4.80 of private land donated value.

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

Support the funding level in the House budget: \$905,156

The Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) within the Department of Fish and Game conducts restoration projects that protect public health, public safety and the environment by improving water quality in our rivers, protecting drinking water and reducing flooding. This impressive agency works with municipalities all over the state through community-based partnerships to remove dams and replace culverts. For every \$1M 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. DER leverages each state dollar invested with federal, private, and local funding by a factor of 1:5. The program currently lacks staff to meet the ongoing demand for services. With a small funding increase to hire two more staff, DER could double its impact.

DCR Watershed Management (Line-Item 2800-0101)

Support the funding level in the House budget: \$982,526

At a time when science is under attack nationally, the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Watershed Management program plays a critically important role in generating environmental research and analysis for our state. Other agencies rely on DCR's data for flood control, drought resiliency, and sustainable water supplies. Staff are responsible for restoring DCR's lakes and freshwater swimming beaches, in addition to managing state projects to remove invasive species that threaten local waterways. This office also staffs the Water Resources Commission and provides technical expertise and resources to the state's Drought Management Task Force. With a modest funding increase, this office would increase its capacity to address invasive species, flood and drought management concerns.

Department of Agricultural Resources Administration (Line-Item 2511-0100)

Support the funding level in the Senate budget: \$5,892,651

Massachusetts has over 7,700 farms and our agricultural sector supports 61,000 jobs, but the agency responsible for agricultural programs receives a miniscule amount of funds in the state operating budget. The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) plays a key role in preserving farmland and assisting farmers in implementing best management practices to protect public health, foster environmentally sustainable, and

increase financial viability. MDAR's budget is down by about 20% from 10 years ago, even though the number of farms, people employed by farms, and revenue generated by farms has increased during that time.

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 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Green Budget Coalition

See below for signatories

Cc: Secretary Matthew Beaton

Undersecretary Ned Bartlett

Ms. Stolle Singleton

GREEN BUDGET COALITION

Non-Profit Organization Endorsers

Environmental League of Massachusetts	Clean Water Action
Acadia Center	Climate Action Business Association (CABA)
All Dorchester Sports League	Connecticut River Watershed Council
American Farmland Trust	Conservation Law Foundation
Appalachian Mountain Club	East Quabbin Land Trust
Arborway Coalition	Emerald Necklace Conservancy
Association to Preserve Cape Cod	Environment Massachusetts
Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT)	Esplanade Association
Berkshire Grown	Essex County Greenbelt
Berkshire Natural Resources Council	Franklin Land Trust
Better Future Project	Franklin Park Coalition
Boston Harbor Now	Friend of Leo J. Martin Skiing
Boston Park Advocates	Friends of Alewife Reservation
Brookline GreenSpace Alliance	Friends of Myles Standish State Forest
Buzzards Bay Coalition	Friends of Pontoosuc Lake
Campers of Massachusetts	Friends of Robinson State Park
Charles River Watershed Association	Friends of the Blue Hills
Charlestown Waterfront Coalition	Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation
CISA: Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture	Friends of the Public Garden
	Friends of Upton State Forest

Friends of Wompatuck State Park
Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts
Goldenrod Foundation
Greater Boston Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Green Newton
GreenRoots, Inc.
Groundwork Lawrence
Groundwork Somerville
Hilltown Anti-Herbicide Coalition
Home Energy Efficiency Team (HEET)
Hoosic River Watershed Association
Hop Brook Protection Association
Housatonic Valley Association
Ipswich River Watershed Association
Keep Massachusetts Beautiful
Kestrel Land Trust
Lakes and Ponds of Western Massachusetts
LivableStreets Alliance
Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust
MA COLAP
Mass Audubon
Mass Energy Consumers Alliance
Massachusetts Association of Conservation
Commissions
Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition
Massachusetts Climate Action Network
Massachusetts Farm to School
Massachusetts Forest and Park Friends
Network
Massachusetts Horticultural Society
Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition
Massachusetts Organization of State
Engineers and Scientists (MOSES)
Massachusetts PipeLine Awareness
Network
Massachusetts Rivers Alliance
Massachusetts Sierra Club
Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance
Massachusetts Society of Municipal
Conservation Professionals
Massachusetts Watershed Coalition
Merrimack River Watershed Council
Mothers Out Front
Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust
Mystic River Watershed Association
Nashua River Watershed Association
National Wildlife Federation
Neponset River Watershed Association
New England Mountain Bike Association
New England Wild Flower Society
New Marlborough Land Trust
Newton Conservators
North and South Rivers Watershed
Association
OARS: For the Assabet, Sudbury and
Concord Rivers
Parker River Clean Water Association
Project Green Schools
Saunders Hotel Group
Save The Bay - Narragansett Bay
Southeastern Massachusetts Pine Barrens
Alliance
SuAsCo River Stewardship Council
Sudbury Valley Trustees
The Charles River Conservancy
The Nature Conservancy
The Trust for Public Land
The Trustees
The Trustees Collaborative for Parks and
Open Space

Wastewater Advisory Committee to the
MWRA

Western Massachusetts Public Lands
Alliance

Environmental League of Massachusetts Corporate Council Endorsers

Carpenter and Co.

Costa Fruit & Produce

Eastern Bank

EcoLogical Solutions

Grossman Marketing Group

Legal Sea Foods

Lyft

Saunders Hotel Group

Trillium

Triumvirate Environmental