



Green Budget FY20 Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) Administration

Request

- Increase MassDEP's Administration line-item (2200-0100) by \$2.17M to \$31.5M (from \$29.13M in FY19.) Governor's proposed FY20 budget is \$31,500,000.

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.
- The Administration line-item is the primary funding source supporting MassDEP's permit, compliance and enforcement mission.
- This account funds personnel for statewide planning, monitoring, permit review, compliance inspections, enforcement and technical assistance for the following environmental programs:
 - Clean Air
 - Solid and Hazardous Waste Management
 - Drinking Water Program
 - Wetlands and Waterways
 - Watershed Planning and Assessment
 - Industrial Wastewater Management
- MassDEP is spearheading a number of significant water related initiatives in FY18. They are developing site-specific aluminum criteria for waterbodies for the first time, reviewing marine dissolved oxygen criteria, developing new biological criteria to improve water quality assessments, revising the statewide water quality standards, and developing a targeted statewide monitoring network with USGS.

Examples of Need

- Since FY08, MassDEP staff have been reduced by 30%. The current level of 660 full-time equivalent staff is the lowest staffing level in a dozen years.
- More than 100 MassDEP employees took advantage of the Early Retirement Incentive Program in 2015. Since then the agency has refilled only 34 positions, almost half of which are water-related.
- Despite these staffing cuts, MassDEP faces additional responsibilities to comply with Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court decisions (like the 2018 decision to uphold the state's ability to cut emissions from power plants,) and to implement new laws and regulations.
- Deep budget cuts have jeopardized the ability of MassDEP to do its work. The agency is extremely limited in its ability to issue permits in a timely fashion, provide technical assistance, and enforce state law.
- According to a Boston Globe investigation in March 2017, MassDEP enforcement actions for serious violations are down by 50% and fine collections are down 75%, a result of their elimination of compliance and enforcement positions.
- An addition of \$1 million for the MassDEP Administration line-item would enable the agency to hire back approximately 10-12 staff.
- With an additional \$2.17 million in funding, MassDEP could hire back more than 10 enforcement and compliance officers, five permit officers, and five monitoring and assessment staff.