



Green Budget FY20 Division of Ecological Restoration

Request

- Increase DER's FY20 operating budget (line item (2300-0101) by \$500K to \$1.75M (from \$1.255M in FY19.) Governor's proposed FY20 budget is \$1,342,963.

Overview

- DER partners with municipalities, agencies, and NGOs to complete projects such as dam removals, culvert upgrades, wetland restoration, and urban river revitalization.
- These projects directly support the Commonwealth's priorities for climate adaptation, public safety, and habitat restoration while generating significant economic benefits.
- DER's technical assistance and project leadership is critical to helping communities and state agencies carry out many of the priority actions identified in the 2018 Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan.
- The Division's work strongly supports and compliments EEA restoration and adaptation programs, including Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness and the Dam and Seawall Fund.
- DER staff help guide community projects through design and permitting, and position projects for successful implementation through multiple state, federal, and NGO funding programs.
- The Division's budget and staffing levels are still well below what's needed to meet existing community demands for support of identified priority projects.

Examples of Need

- There are 3,000 dams and 30,000 culverts across the state, many of which have long-exceeded their design life and are vulnerable to increasing threats from severe storms and flooding. Many communities lack the technical and financial capacity to address this legacy infrastructure that impacts environmental health, public safety, municipal budgets, and community resilience to climate change. Requests for DER's assistance to removal old dams, upgrade substandard culverts, and complete other restoration actions far exceed the Division's current resources.
- Facing significant economic and demographic pressures, the MA cranberry industry recently projected that 25% of farmers may seek to retire bog lands over the next five years. That could result in over 3,000 acres of bogs going fallow. These conditions present a unique need and opportunity to restore and protect vast areas of critical habitat. Once restored, these lands can provide important climate adaptation benefits for water quality, flood control, biodiversity, and public recreation. DER's Cranberry Bog Program helps farmers pursue land protection and restoration, but currently it can only meet a small fraction of anticipated need.

Return on Investment (operating and capital budgets)

- In general, every \$100K increase in DER's operating budget can support an additional restoration project manager. Each project manager oversees 5-10 dam removal, culvert replacement, or wetland restoration projects, completing 1-3 projects every year.
- On average, DER leverages \$5 in external funding for every \$1 of state capital investment.
- Every \$1 million in state investment combined with leveraged funds produces approximately 10 dam removal projects, 10 culvert replacement projects, or 150 acres of restored wetland.
- State investment through DER creates or sustains high-paying jobs in construction and engineering sectors (12.5 jobs per \$1 million spent).
- Completed restoration-adaptation projects also save communities money through avoided infrastructure maintenance and storm damage costs, and reduced expenses for emergency response, evacuations, and business shutdowns resulting from flooding and road closures.