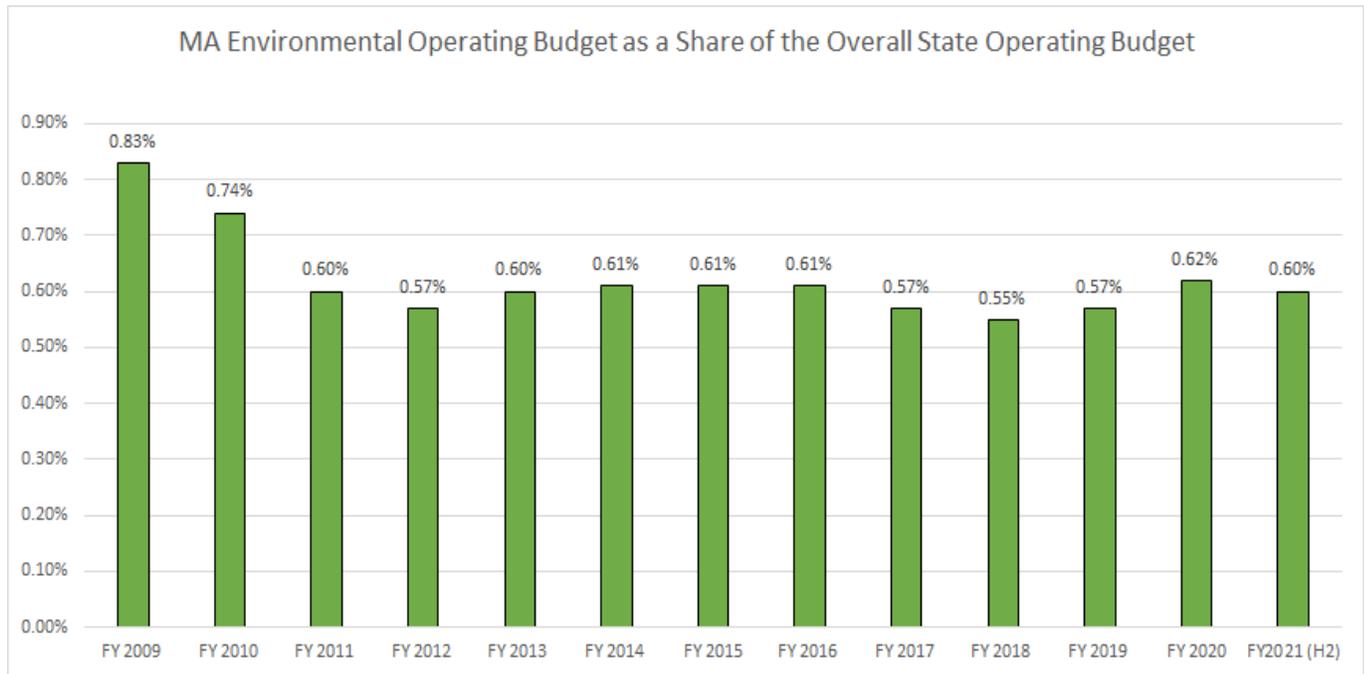




Green Budget FY21

Key points about the Massachusetts environmental budget

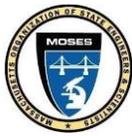
- Currently, 0.60% of the state’s operating budget goes to protect our environment. By contrast, in the early 2000’s, 1% of the state budget supported our environmental agencies.
- A healthy environment supports a healthy economy. Tourism, agriculture, outdoor recreation, the fishing industry, and clean energy are important job and revenue generators.
- Environmental agency funding is insufficient to meet demands and growing responsibilities.
 - The Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) and Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) have suffered drastic cuts in recent years and staffing is down 25% compared to a few years ago.
 - Many DCR properties are unstaffed or have such minimal staff presence that enforcement, safety, programming, and user experience are being negatively impacted.
 - MassDEP staff is stretched to cover its wide-ranging responsibilities. Additional staff are needed to monitor water quality, enforce solid waste bans, and deal with newer issues such as emerging contaminants (including PFAS) and climate change regulation.



Green budget includes the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Department of Agricultural Resources, Department of Conservation and Recreation, Department of Environmental Protection, and the Department of Fish and Game.

Priority line-items

- Increase DCR’s State Parks and Recreation line item (2810-0100) by \$2.75M to \$50M (from \$47.25M in FY20).
- Increase MassDEP’s Administration line item (2200-0100) by \$7.92M to \$40M (from \$32.08M in FY20).
- Increase DER’s line item (2300-0101) by \$500K to \$2.6M (from \$2.1M in FY20 including a \$100K earmark).
- Increase NHESP’s line item (2310-0300) by \$846K to \$1M (\$154K in FY20).



Green Budget FY21 Department of Environmental Protection Administration

Request

Increase the Department of Environmental Protection's (MassDEP) Administration line-item (2200-0100) by \$7.92M to \$40M (from \$32.08M in FY20). H2 is \$33.65M.

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 continuing to spearhead significant water related initiatives. They are developing site-specific aluminum criteria for waterbodies for the first time, developing new biological criteria to improve water quality assessments, revising the statewide water quality standards, and developing a targeted statewide monitoring network with the U.S. Geological Survey.

Examples of Need

- More than 100 MassDEP employees took advantage of the Early Retirement Incentive Program in 2015.
- \$1.1M of H2's \$1.5M increase is already specified for PFAS efforts
- 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.
 - With the current schedule, all permits will not be available online for another two years
- 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.
- DEP will be expanding the waste ban program, yet 40% of loads at the current waste levels contain banned materials.



Green Budget FY21 Division of Ecological Restoration

Request

Increase the Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) FY21 operating budget line item (2300-0101) by \$500K to \$2.6M (from \$2.1M in FY20 including a \$100K earmark). H2 is \$2M.

Overview

- DER partners with municipalities, agencies, and NGOs to complete projects such as dam removals, culvert replacement, salt marsh restoration, and urban river revitalization.
- DER staff guide restoration projects through design and permitting, positioning projects for successful implementation through state, federal, and NGO funding programs.
- DER projects 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 carry out restoration and adaptation projects identified in Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness plans.
- DER's assistance is also critical to helping state agencies carry out many of the priority actions identified in the 2018 State Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan.
- DER supports and complements EEA restoration and adaptation programs such as the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program and the Dam and Seawall Fund.
- DER's budget and staffing levels are still well below what's needed to meet existing community demands for support.

Examples of Need

- Requests for DER's technical, project management, and funding assistance far exceed DER's resources. There are 3,000 dams and 25,000 culverts and small bridges across the state, many of which are deteriorating and are vulnerable to threats from severe storms and flooding. Aging dams and culverts impact environmental health, public safety, municipal budgets, and community resilience to climate change. Communities want to remove dams and upgrade culverts but lack the knowledge, technical skills, and funds to do so. In FY20, for example, DER received grant proposals to replace culverts from 78 municipalities requesting more than \$6.4 million in funds, but they only had \$750,000 to disperse for grant support.
- DER's Cranberry Bog Program helps farmers pursue land protection and restoration, but it can only meet a small fraction of anticipated need. Facing significant economic and demographic pressures, the MA cranberry industry 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 wetlands 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.

Return on Investment (operating and capital budgets)

- An increase of \$500,000 will allow DER to add four restoration staff (they currently have 20 FTE's). Restoration staff manage projects, provide 1:1 technical assistance to municipalities and landowners, oversee grant programs, and develop training programs and tools for communities and landowners.
- Each of DER's project managers 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.

For more information: Casey Bowers, Legislative Director, Environmental League of Massachusetts,
cbowers@environmentalleague.org, 781-771-5404



- 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.



Green Budget FY21

Department of Conservation and Recreation: State Parks and Recreation

Request

Increase the Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) State Parks and Recreation line item (2810-0100) budget by \$2.75M to \$50M (from \$47.25M in FY20). H2 is \$47.64M.

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.
 - Forests that protect drinking water supplies for millions of people in the Commonwealth.
- DCR contributes to our quality of life, public health, and our economy.
- DCR's parks supports \$16.2 billion in annual recreation spending.
- State parks serve people of all income levels, offering access to natural treasures and beauty of Massachusetts.

Examples of Need

- The agency lost nearly 400 full-time positions (30% of its workforce) over eight years. The FY21 increase is helping reverse that trend, and there is further to go to restore services.
- DCR currently has approximately 896 full-time equivalent staff (FTEs), down from 1,279 in 2008
- The entire state is served by only a 15-person park operations support crew. DCR field managers are now spread across more properties, leaving many facilities and lands essentially unstaffed or infrequently monitored which impacts public safety and enforcement of environmental laws.
- Continued prioritization of the staffing of visitor centers.
- The impacts of climate change are worsening. DCR properties need to be prepared for flooding, new pests, risk of infections, and other climate risks.

With the additional funds DCR could:

- Hire additional staff to serve unstaffed parks (for every \$1M, DCR can restore 15-20 FTE).
- Increase publicity for the parks which could also drive revenue
- Increase the Park Support Operations crew to 25, up from the current 15
- Engage an adequate number of engineers to plan and inspect capital improvement projects
- Convert some of the most effective long-term seasonal staff to FTEs to provide consistency and retain knowledge
- Increase planning staff to ensure every property has a Resource Management Plan

Special Projects (2810-0122):

It continues to be helpful to assign special projects to a separate account (2810-0122) rather than the State Parks & Recreation account. Continuing that practice is appreciated.



Green Budget FY21 Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program

Request

Increase MassWildlife's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program line-item (2310-0300) by \$846K to \$1M (\$154K in FY20). H2 is \$154,222.

Overview

- MassWildlife's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) is responsible for the protection, management, and restoration of the Commonwealth's most imperiled animals and plants and the sensitive communities and habitats on which they depend, including species listed under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA).
- This line item funds NHESP staff and operations, including:
 - Recovering rare species populations through restoration efforts and active management of habitat.
 - Collecting, managing, and analyzing biological data on rare species and vulnerable natural communities to inform conservation efforts statewide.
 - Conducting regulatory reviews.
 - Providing educational programming, publications, and conservation tools to connect residents with nature and help guide state and partner conservation efforts – including the widely respected BioMap, Living Waters, and BioMap2.
- Over 400 native plant and animal species remain listed as endangered, threatened, or of special concern under MESA. In the face of habitat loss, emerging diseases, invasive species, and climate change, this work is more important than ever. MESA turns 30 years old in 2020; now is the ideal time to increase resources for this critical team.

Examples of Need

- Prior to FY04, annual funding for NHESP was more than \$500,000. In FY04, the NHESP line item was eliminated and was not restored until FY12. The state has provided a mere \$150,000 for this important program each year for the past 8 years, accounting for only 5% of NHESP's annual operating budget.¹
- Aside from the small line item and modest MESA regulatory review fees, the NHESP depends heavily on grants and donations from a voluntary state income tax check off to fund its operations.
- In recent years, the NHESP has consistently run a significant operating deficit. MassWildlife's current approach to addressing this deficit is unsustainable and places an excessive burden on hunters and anglers.
- Increased funding is needed to close the deficit, reduce reliance on fluctuating federal funds, meet strict regulatory review requirements, pursue BioMap3, and permanently protect biological diversity.
- The bulk of the requested funding is required to address the structural program deficit and *maintain existing NHESP operations*. Fully funding this request would enable the program to fill one vacant regulatory review position, add a restoration ecologist, and maintain a coastal water bird coordinator. This will enable the program to expand science, mapping, management, and restoration efforts, and serve developers timely needs for regulatory review.
- If fully funded at \$1M, general funds would still account for less than 35% of the NHESP budget providing outstanding leverage on this investment. Everyone benefits from well managed natural areas and open spaces, clean waters, and healthy plants and wildlife populations. An investment in diversified and sustainable NHESP funding is an investment worth making.

¹ This does not include a \$70,000 and \$100,000 earmark for piping plover habitat restoration received in FY18 and FY19, respectfully, which was not provided in FY20.