



## The FY2026 Green Budget

Protecting the Commonwealth’s land, water, air, and wildlife, while meeting our climate goals and supporting healthy communities and historically underserved populations, requires state agencies that are well-resourced and well-staffed. The Green Budget Coalition advocates for robust, sustainable state funding for climate and conservation work to meet the scope and scale of our climate, conservation, and adaptation challenges.

The Green Budget covers the state agencies within the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC), and the Clean Water Trust. Currently, around 1% of the state’s operating budget is spent on energy and environmental programs.<sup>[1]</sup> These agencies have experienced modest but steady growth over the past several fiscal years, but many departments still receive less funding and maintain lower staff levels than before the Great Recession. In FY25, these items received a \$12.9 million total increase in funding, or 2.6%, while the overall budget grew 3.0%.

Funding these priorities in the FY26 budget will ensure that, even in an uncertain fiscal environment, Energy and Environmental Affairs programs and staff are able to continue providing critical services and support to communities and residents. The multi-pronged benefits of these investments help to ensure that we continue to make progress on emissions reduction, support communities working to lead on conservation and environmental justice, increase access to outdoor recreation for all residents, protect public health and safety, and grow our state’s economy.

### The Green Budget funds:



**Continue progress toward climate and conservation goals.** Massachusetts is not on track to meet its statutory goal of 50% emissions reduction below 1990 levels by 2030 or its goal to permanently conserve 30% of land by 2030. In order to continue to reduce emissions from our highest-emitting sectors (transportation, the built environment, and the electric grid) and to increase our capacity to absorb and sequester carbon in our natural and working lands, state agencies must be staffed and empowered to manage renewable energy incentive programs, vehicle emissions regulations, and natural resource protection strategies.

**Successfully implement new laws and plans.** Recent climate and clean energy laws have created important new roles for EEA agencies, including the development of siting and permitting reform regulations, management of energy storage procurements, and additional support for community stakeholders in energy project proceedings. At the same time, EEA has worked to produce new and updated planning for initiatives like ResilientMass and statewide biodiversity goals. Successful, timely implementation will depend on ensuring adequate staff are hired to take these new policies from plan to reality.

**Give communities the support they need.** Whether it’s managing local parks, providing technical guidance for water quality monitoring, awarding grants for ecological restoration projects, or overseeing the Green Communities program, EEA agencies and staff provide support for local projects in every city and town in Massachusetts. Ensuring that the operating budget funds the necessary staff for this programmatic work helps to reduce backlogs and waiting lists, expand capacity, and provide scientific expertise to support municipal environmental protection work.

<sup>[1]</sup> The FY25 budget appropriated \$545 million for energy and environmental programs (EEA agencies, Clean Water Trust contract assistance, and MassCEC), roughly 0.95% of its \$57.7 billion total.



## FY2026 Green Budget Priorities

The **Green Budget Coalition** has identified the following priorities for inclusion in the FY26 state operating budget. These items are largely consistent with the Governor's H.1 recommendations, which prioritize continuity and targeted growth in a challenging budget environment.

**Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (2000-0100):** \$20,898,482 (\$200,000 increase over FY25)

As Massachusetts faces increasing federal headwinds toward meeting its 2025 and 2030 climate and clean energy goals, ensuring that the Executive Office remains adequately staffed to manage the state's ongoing and rapidly evolving strategy to secure and deploy new renewable energy resources and to support local emissions-reduction initiatives. In addition, more staff capacity is needed to coordinate interagency work required for increased trail access and interconnectivity across the Commonwealth.

**Department of Environmental Protection (2200-0100):** \$54,359,482 (level funding)

MassDEP plays an essential role in ensuring that all residents have access to clean air and water, while both face greater threats than ever before. PFAS contamination and its impacts on communities and vulnerable residents continue to require the Department to increase its testing, monitoring, and technical assistance capacity and to support municipalities shouldering the burden of remediation. MassDEP has also begun integrating cumulative impact analysis into its permitting, updating Water Management Act permits with stronger climate resiliency measures, streamlining restoration under wetlands protection regulations, and writing regulations for the Clean Heat Standard and Low-Emission Vehicle Program.

**DCR State Parks and Recreation (2810-0100):** \$112,563,143 (\$2,518,583 increase over FY25)

DCR continues to work to increase staffing and reduce deferred maintenance backlogs at its properties while preparing state-owned land for future climate impacts. The Department also plays an important role in ensuring equitable access to the outdoors, as roughly a quarter of its properties are located in environmental justice communities.

**Department of Energy Resources (7006-1003):** \$8,919,402 (\$2,260,065 increase over FY25)

DOER, which gets the bulk of its funding from an assessment on ratepayers, will be required to establish a new Division of Clean Energy Siting and Permitting under the 2024 clean energy law. In order for the Division to meet its new obligations for developing enhanced community engagement and site suitability guidelines and more efficient and equitable regulations for necessary renewable energy infrastructure, DOER must be empowered to hire new staff to support this work.

**Department of Fish and Game (2300-0100):** \$2,268,915 (\$191,256 increase over FY25)

DFG continues to play an essential role in land conservation, endangered species protection, and implementation of "blue carbon" restoration projects. The technical and scientific expertise housed at DFG helps to ensure that sensitive natural communities and land of high ecological value is identified and responsibly managed statewide. In addition, the Department intends to hire a new Biodiversity Officer to oversee the Commonwealth's Biodiversity Plan.

**Division of Ecological Restoration (2300-0101):** \$5,506,476 (level funding)

DER projects that restore riverways, wetlands, and coasts remain popular and in high demand, and the multiyear effort to staff up this small but important Division has resulted in a reduction, but not elimination, of project backlogs. At any given time, DER has roughly 40 projects underway, and year-over-year continuity in funding will help to ensure that the Division can meet project timelines to help communities enhance safety and avoid costs by reducing flooding and restoring natural systems.

### **Level Funding for core EEA programs:**

In recognition of the critical roles that EEA agencies continue to play in meeting our climate and conservation goals amid a constrained revenue picture, the Green Budget Coalition strongly recommends preserving level funding for core EEA programs to ensure stability and continuity for agencies working to fill vacant staff roles and implement new policies.



## Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs FY26 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.



## Department of Environmental Protection FY26 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.



## DCR State Parks and Recreation FY26 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."



## Department of Energy Resources FY26 Green Budget Priority

**Request:** Fund the Department of Energy Resources assessment line item (7006-1003) at \$8,919,402 (\$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.



## Department of Fish and Game FY26 Green Budget Priority

**Request:** Fund the Department of Fish and Game Administration line item (2300-0100) at \$2,268,915 (\$191,256 increase over FY25).

### Overview

- The Department of Fish and Game plays a major role in land conservation and habitat management in the Commonwealth, a role that both includes and extends far beyond the outdoor recreation economy and has grown significantly as climate resiliency and adaptation needs have increased. Last year, DFG released its [five-year strategic plan](#) that details its conservation and capacity-building work leading up to 2030.
- Massachusetts has a rich natural heritage, with a tremendous diversity of plants, animals, and ecosystems due to its wide range of geography and habitats - but our biodiversity is threatened. In MA, 453 native plant and animal species are currently [listed](#) under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act. Accelerating climate change both drives and exacerbates these vulnerabilities, the total number species currently listed as endangered has increased by 4.9% over the last two years.
- In FY25, DFG established a “blue carbon” program aimed at supporting carbon sinks and other climate/ecological benefits from natural and working lands. This program will work to restore and protect 4,000-5,000 acres of salt marsh in coastal communities across the state.
- In September 2023, Governor Healey signed the nation’s [first Executive Order](#) “to support, complement, and advance Massachusetts’s biodiversity conservation efforts.” Under the EO DFG conducted a review of existing biodiversity conservation efforts across all agencies and to establish goals and strategies to achieve a nature-positive future for Massachusetts in 2030, 2040, and 2050.
- MA has several existing tools to help implement new biodiversity goals, including the [State Wildlife Action Plan](#); [BioMap](#); and the Natural and Working Lands conservation goals within the Clean Energy and Climate Plans. However, despite these plans, our communities continue to experience the loss and degradation of critical habitats. In fact, Massachusetts loses nearly 5,000 acres of natural land each year to development ([13.5 acres per day](#).)

### Examples of Need

- To meet the state’s climate-related conservation goals, DFG has set a target of conserving 6,000 acres of land a year by 2030 (double its current rate of 3,000 acres per year). The Department is also in the process of completing decarbonization plans for its facilities as part of the state’s Leading By Example program.
- Final recommendations stemming from the biodiversity executive order are expected to be released this spring, and the Governor’s budget recommendation includes funding for a new Biodiversity Officer and programmatic support to oversee the implementation of the Commonwealth’s Biodiversity Plan.
- DFG is seeking capital funding to launch a Community Biodiversity Grant Program to support communities to achieve our biodiversity goals. Local grants for biodiversity will help support local projects such as: trash removal booms, dark skies, and pollinator habitat.



## Division of Ecological Restoration FY26 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.