

June 24, 2019

The Honorable Senator Michael J. Barrett, Chair  
Massachusetts Statehouse  
24 Beacon Street, Room 109-D  
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Representative Thomas A. Golden, Chair  
Massachusetts State House  
24 Beacon Street, Room 473B  
Boston, MA 02133

**RE: Support – H.3846, *An Act relative to Greenworks***

Dear Chair Barrett, Chair Golden and Honorable Members of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we are writing to express our strong support for H.3846, *An Act relative to Greenworks*, and respectfully request a favorable report by the Committee.

As organizations who often collaborate and coordinate with municipalities and state agencies in planning for the impacts of climate change on water resources, we recognize the significant need for state investments in climate resiliency. Year after year, our state achieves new records for rainfall, nor'easters, flooding and more. It is increasingly apparent that we are now living in an age of weather extremes brought about by climate change. We commend Speaker DeLeo and Chair Golden for developing this series of bold, new initiatives through the GreenWorks legislation that provide robust support to communities grappling with the impacts of climate change.

First, we appreciate the inclusion of the sustainability coordinator grant program in the proposed legislation. Communities, particularly small towns, that are resource-strapped may currently lack sufficient staff with the expertise to address sustainability initiatives in their communities. This funding will address an immediate need and strengthen the capacity of municipalities to address these issues.

Second, we support the development of the Green Resiliency Fund. These loans will provide critical assistance to municipalities as they make resiliency improvements and investments in their communities. While recognizing that the hardening of assets may be required in some instances to adequately respond to climate change impacts for the short term, we ask that the Committee consider amending the current bill language to make eligible improvements that incorporate nature-based solutions. These solutions can serve as a cost-effective option to incorporate and utilize natural systems as a means to address climate change impacts.

Finally, we support the development of the GreenWorks infrastructure program. These grants will enable municipalities to make substantial progress in addressing significant infrastructure

upgrades or replacements, adaptation and resiliency measures and improvements as identified through the municipal vulnerability preparedness program. As we are seeing currently with the state's Culvert Municipal Grant Program where demand is more than five times greater than the allotted funding for that program, it is clear that towns and cities recognize their infrastructure vulnerabilities and want to act now. This new infrastructure program will enable them to do just that. We ask, however, that the Committee consider amending the current bill language to prioritize funding for municipalities that apply for projects that include nature-based solutions, in the interest of elevating projects that are cost-effective, low impact and beneficial for our natural resources. We also request that the Committee consider prioritizing funding for municipalities that apply jointly for funding, particularly projects that take a watershed-scale approach to addressing climate change impacts. A watershed-scale approach to planning allows for the integrated management of human activities and natural resources, while incorporating the protection of important water resources. As all water resources are connected and often cross town boundaries, multi-town planning that fosters collaboration and involvement of a wide variety of managerial and community interests is essential to ensuring that communities are taking advantage of resources effectively and efficiently. We also ask that the Committee consider amending the current bill language to allow regional planning agencies and watershed associations to apply as project coordinators for these joint municipal efforts as they have expertise working on projects at this scale.

In order to adequately prepare the towns and cities of the Commonwealth for the significant effects of climate change, the state must make significant investments that support communities in upgrading infrastructure across the state, while utilizing nature-based solutions to reinforce resilience. For these reasons, we ask the Committee to consider our proposed changes and favorably report out H.3846.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact Gabby Queenan, Policy Director of the Massachusetts Rivers Alliance if you have any questions ([gabbyqueenan@massriversalliance.org](mailto:gabbyqueenan@massriversalliance.org) or 617-714-4272).

Sincerely,

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Massachusetts Rivers Alliance

Don Keeran  
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