

June 24, 2019

The Honorable Senator Adam G. Hinds, Chair
Massachusetts Statehouse
24 Beacon Street, Room 109-E
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Representative Mark J. Cusack, Chair
Massachusetts State House
24 Beacon Street, Room 34
Boston, MA 02133

RE: Support – S.10, *An Act providing for climate change adaptation infrastructure investments in the Commonwealth*

Dear Chair Hinds and Chair Cusack and Honorable Members of the Joint Committee on Revenue,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we are writing to express our strong support for S.10, *An Act providing for climate change adaptation infrastructure investments in the Commonwealth*, and respectfully request a favorable report by the Committee.

As organizations intimately familiar with the impact climate change can have on our water resources and consequently the health and economies of local communities, we cannot stress enough the importance of state investments in planning and preparedness to address climate-related risks. From the drought of 2015-2017 that wreaked havoc on water and wildlife across the state, to the extreme storms of March 2017 that flooded urban communities and pummeled our shoreline, it is clearer than ever that weather extremes are the new norm for our state. We commend Governor Baker and his administration for supporting initiatives that help communities become climate-ready and resilient, including the filing of S.10.

This legislation would build on the success of this administration's existing resiliency programs, including the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program (MVP). It has been just over three years since the program's implementation and over 70% of the Commonwealth's cities and towns have joined this initiative. This program provides funding assistance for communities to identify climate-related hazards and implement priority projects to improve resilience and reduce risks from weather extremes. As more communities engage in the program and advance projects from planning to implementation, demand for a dedicated revenue source will only grow. Without dedicated, sustainable funding, the program will support only a limited number of communities.

S.10 would create a modest increase on the Commonwealth's deeds excise rate, paid by the seller at the time of sale, from \$2 to \$3 per \$500 of value (from \$1.50 to \$2.50 per \$500 of value). This represents an all-in rate increase of 0.228 percent. While this additional fee represents an extremely modest increase in real estate transaction costs, the total funds raised each year could contribute significantly to our state's climate resiliency. According to the Baker

Administration, S.10 would provide an estimated \$75 million in fiscal year 2020 and \$137 million on an annualized basis, resulting in approximately \$1 billion over 10 years, to be deposited in the Global Warming Solutions Trust Fund (established in the 2018 Climate Bond).

Initiatives that would be funded by the Global Warming solutions Trust Fund include:

- Loans, grants and technical assistance for communities through the MVP Program.
- Financial assistance for infrastructure upgrades and planning that may include stormwater upgrades, dam removals and retrofits, drainage and culvert improvements, drought mitigation and preparedness, nature-based solutions and other adaptation-centric strategies.
- Assistance for state and local agencies to prioritize, plan and retrofit vulnerable assets, including dam and flood controls, water resources, and natural resources that protect private investments.

In order to truly address the hazards posed by climate change, the state must take serious steps to upgrade infrastructure across the Commonwealth and utilize nature-based solutions to reinforce resilience and reduce climate-related risks. Without dedicated state funding to keep pace with these upgrades, communities will be left to foot an impossible infrastructure bill in the face of climate change. For these reasons, we urge the Committee to favorably report out S.10.

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 or 617-714-4272).

Sincerely,

Gabby Queenan
Policy Director
Massachusetts Rivers Alliance

Don Keeran
Assistant Director
Association to Preserve Cape Cod

Laura Jasinski
Executive Director
Charles River Conservancy

Emily Norton
Executive Director
Charles River Watershed Association

Heather McMann
Executive Director
Groundwork Lawrence

Wayne Castonguay
Executive Director
Ipswich River Watershed Association

Michael Cusher
Legislative Director
Mass Audubon

Dorothy McGlincy
Executive Director
Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions

Jon Macone
Co-Executive Director
Merrimack River Watershed Council

Patrick Herron
Executive Director
Mystic River Watershed Association

Kerry Snyder
Advocacy Director
Neponset River Watershed Association

Samantha Woods
Executive Director
North and South Rivers Watershed Association

Kate McPherson
Narragansett Bay Riverkeeper
Save The Bay

Steve Long
Director of Government Relations
The Nature Conservancy

Jennifer Ryan
Director of Policy
Trustees