



Massachusetts MVP Coalition

Representative Daniel Cahill
24 Beacon Street
Room 527A
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

10/25/2024

Representative Cahill,

The Ipswich River Watershed Association, in coordination with the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Coalition, write to request that you support an \$80 million dollar increase in the MVP program in next year's environmental bond bill, bringing the program's total budget to \$100 million annually. The MVP program is the primary way in which the state provides funds to our cities and towns who are on the front lines of dealing with the impacts of climate change. In the face of flooding and drought that is only projected to increase in both frequency and intensity, Massachusetts municipalities will require more resources to both prepare for and recover from these extreme climate events.

Communities are already facing the consequences of intensifying climate change. Right now, the U.S. Drought Monitor shows almost all of Massachusetts experiencing what it categorizes as D0, or abnormally dry. Drought threatens critical municipal water supplies. Communities in our basin see their source water quality decline during drought as contaminants are concentrated in lower water levels. Towns face challenges to meet drinking water standards when source water quality is compromised. Promoting water conservation during drought and preparing critical infrastructure for these low water availability are resource intensive activities for towns who continue to need financial support to prepare for the impacts of drought.

While drought has a major impact on the North Shore and the Ipswich River Watershed, flooding is also a constant issue for these communities. In Ipswich, Jeffrey's Neck Road floods several times during winter nor'easters, cutting off the residents of Great Neck and Little Neck until the flooding subsides. In Essex, the Causeway chronically floods and splits the town in two while Salem faces regular floods during monthly king tides. These extreme weather events require MVP action grants to address, and this past year IRWA worked with the town of Wilmington to secure an MVP action grant to address flooding in Wilmington and North Reading along Martin's Brook by working to upgrade undersized culverts on this stream which cannot handle climate driven intense precipitation events. Flooding on the North Shore and along the Ipswich River Watershed puts significant strain on the \$20 million currently allocated for the

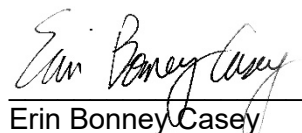
MVP program, and there is simply not enough to go around; in May, Swampscott was denied MVP funding to redesign low lying areas to mitigate flood pathways. The status quo faced by coastal communities and municipalities across the commonwealth is not sustainable, and requires additional resources to address.

Flooding is not merely a coastal issue either, as Hurricane Helene demonstrated, and Massachusetts towns across the Commonwealth are applying for and executing on MVP grants. This year, the Franklin Regional Council of Governments received a \$646,025 MVP action grant to build a comprehensive Flood Model. The town of Hadley received a \$157,641 MVP action grant to tackle chronic flooding of roads and agricultural fields caused by undersized culverts and drainage channels that handle runoff from highly impervious upstream areas, while the town of South Hadley received a total of \$1,675,063 across four action grants for water flow construction projects along Elmer Brook and Buttery Brook, removal of the Queensville Dam, and developing a climate resilient asset transportation management plan. These projects will all cut down on the number of factors that exacerbated the 2023 flooding of Pioneer Valley towns on the Connecticut River, and increase safeguards against future floods.

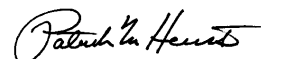
As expected, these extreme weather events will only continue to worsen with time. According to The Trustees of Reservations 2020 report "The State of the Coast", the dangers posed by rising sea levels to North Shore communities continue to increase exponentially. By 2070, 3,100 North Shore buildings could face tidal flooding on a daily basis, and 12,000 buildings could flood during a hundred-year storm. In Lynn alone, a hundred-year storm risks flooding 2,313 properties according to the climate risk firm First Street. By 2050, this number rises to 2,812. Hundred-year storms have a 26% chance of occurring at least once over the span of a 30-year mortgage, and will have a devastating effect on the communities they hit. While we must continue to develop policies that mitigate climate change, we must also invest in programs that adapt our communities to the current realities they regularly face. In FY2025, 71 MVP action grants have been awarded to cities and towns across the commonwealth. However, it is clear that every single community will need to prepare for the impacts of climate change. MVP grants for resiliency projects such as constructing seawalls, building marsh elevation, and removing dams and culverts to reduce the impacts of flooding will be crucial for the health and sustainability of communities across the Commonwealth.

We hope you support expansion of the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program, and look forward to working with you during the legislative session.

Sincerely,



Erin Bonney Casey
Executive Director
Ipswich River Watershed Association




Patrick Herron
Executive Director
Mystic River Watershed Association



Katharine Lange
Policy Director
Massachusetts River Alliance



Cabell Eames
Advocacy Director
Charles River Watershed Association

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kerry M. Snyder", written over a horizontal line.

Kerry Snyder
Managing Director for Community Resilience
Neponset River Watershed Association