

Massachusetts Gov. Baker administration awards over \$17 Million in funding for dams and coastal infrastructure

The Baker-Polito Administration today announced over \$17.3 million in grants to address failing dams, coastal infrastructure, and levees across the Commonwealth. The announcement was made by Governor Charlie Baker, Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Kathleen Theoharides and state and local officials at Haskell Pond Dam in the City of Gloucester. The Administration also highlighted its \$2.9 billion proposal to immediately invest a portion of Massachusetts' federal funds from the American Rescue Plan Act in urgent priorities, including \$300 million for climate-resilient infrastructure.

The grants, which were awarded by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' (EEA) Dam and Seawall Program, will support permitting and construction projects in Acton, Ashfield, Braintree, Brockton, Chicopee, Dracut, Dudley, Essex, Gardner, Gloucester, Hull, Ipswich, Leominster, Marshfield, New Bedford, Northborough, Oxford, Peabody, Quincy, Salem, Saugus, Somerset, Stow, Springfield, Wareham, Weymouth, the Wildlands Trust (Kingston), and Worcester.

"The Commonwealth's cities and towns are seeing the impacts of climate change every day, and our Administration is committed to providing needed funding to support critical resilience projects to address these issues," said Governor Charlie Baker. "These grants will help municipalities make substantial progress to maintain and repair aging dams and seawalls across

Massachusetts.”

“Ensuring dams, seawalls, and levees remain in good condition can be costly on municipal budgets, and we are pleased to provide these Dam and Seawall Program grants to help support municipalities as they make these investments,” said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito. “It is critical that we continue to foster strong partnerships with local communities and organizations to create a more resilient Massachusetts.”

With these 32 new grants, the Dam and Seawall Program has now provided over \$95 million in grants and loans to address deficient dams, seawalls, and levees since the program began in 2013.

“Since coming into office in 2015, the Baker-Polito Administration has delivered over \$82.5 million in funding through the Dam and Seawall Program to improve critical infrastructure that protects our communities and businesses and makes our Commonwealth more resilient to the ongoing impacts of climate change,” said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Kathleen Theoharides. “As we prepare for stronger storms, rising seas, and more intense precipitation, maintenance and enhancement of our aging water control structures, as well as strategies to increase natural infrastructure will help build more resilient cities and towns throughout the state.”

“Dams and seawalls are challenging and costly pieces of infrastructure that must be maintained for public safety, environmental protection, and the health of drinking water,” said Senate Minority Leader Bruce Tarr. “Yet for communities the cost of maintaining them is a heavy burden that strains municipal budgets. Thanks to this grant program and the significant resources it brings, communities don’t have to go it alone in building and maintaining these critical structures. Thanks to the Baker-Polito administration for making these investments, and congratulations to Gloucester,

Ipswich, Essex, and the other recipients who have designed and submitted projects worthy of the support they are receiving today.”

“Although Cape Ann is one of the Commonwealth’s most beautiful resources, the natural landscape creates many infrastructure challenges,” said Representative Ann-Margaret Ferrante. “I am pleased that the Commonwealth is investing and sharing the burden with the City of Gloucester of maintaining and managing Haskell Pond, one of our reservoirs, for use by current and future generations.”

“As a coastal community, we have seen firsthand how devastating winter storms, inland flooding and sea level rise can be for everyone,” said Mayor Sefatia Romeo Theken. “Thankfully, we have continued to work with state leadership on climate resiliency programs, including the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness grant program (MVP) which helped us understand our needs and earn these terrific grant awards supporting the Haskell Pond Dam Repair and Gloucester High School Flood Barrier. On behalf of the City of Gloucester, we thank the Baker-Polito Administration again for their ongoing climate resiliency support and grant programs which continues to return results desperately needed for us all.”

Dam and Seawall Program grant recipients and awarded projects for the SouthCoast:

- City of New Bedford: \$54,000 for E. Rodney French Blvd. Seawall Repair
- Town of Wareham: \$175,000 for the Parker Mills Dam

In June 2021, the Baker-Polito Administration re-filed its plan to immediately put to use part of the Commonwealth’s direct federal aid from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to support key priorities including housing and homeownership, economic development and local downtowns, job training and workforce development, health care, and infrastructure.

As part of the Administration's proposal to jump-start the Commonwealth's economic recovery and support residents hardest-hit by COVID-19, such as lower-wage workers and communities of color, Governor Baker would direct \$900 million to key energy and environmental initiatives, including \$300 million to support climate resilient infrastructure.

The funding would be distributed through programs like EEA's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program and would fund priority climate adaptation projects and investments aligned with the priorities identified in the state hazard mitigation and climate adaptation plan. Investments that would be supported through the funding include the acquisition of land specifically targeted at reducing flooding and the Urban Heat Island Effect.