



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
**THE GENERAL COURT**  
STATE HOUSE BOSTON 02133 1053

March 3, 2014

The Honorable Stephen M. Brewer, Chairman  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
State House, Room 212  
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Brian S. Dempsey, Chairman  
House Committee on Ways and Means  
State House, Room 237  
Boston, MA 02133

**RE: Request to include \$250,000 in FY2015 budget for Mystic River Master Plan Implementation**

Chairmen Brewer and Dempsey:

We are writing as legislators who represent communities in the Mystic River watershed to respectfully request that the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means increase the Department of Conservation and Recreation (“DCR”) FY2015 operating budget in line item 2810-0100 by \$250,000, with the funds dedicated to support completion of the Mystic River Master Plan.

An appropriation in this amount will provide funding to produce final Design Development and construction documents for this project. The Mystic River Master Plan, completed and adopted by DCR in 2009, can unlock tens of millions in private and federal funds – but only if this well-developed Conceptual Plan is first translated into shovel-ready engineering drawings.

Construction of projects outlined in the Master Plan will significantly improve walking and cycling access along the Mystic River and implement many long overdue repairs and renovations in DCR parks located in our communities. In addition, the improvements made to DCR Parkland as contemplated in the Mystic River Master Plan will provide beautification to the parklands, improved access to the river, and will enhance and amplify other recreational opportunities and environmental benefits.

Now is the time to prepare final drawings. As we learned from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (“ARRA”), it is essential to have plans complete in order to take advantage of unanticipated funding opportunities. A good example of this is the work that has been completed in the Charles River watershed over the past ten years.

In 2002 a Master Plan and related construction drawings and documents were completed for the Charles River Basin. Remarkably, by 2009 more than \$120 million had been deployed to completely transform this area. This funding, more than \$99.1 million from Big Dig mitigation funds and another \$26 million from ARRA, would never have been available to the Charles River Basin if the appropriate plans were not in place.

The successes in the Charles River watershed, the Boston Harbor and elsewhere demonstrate that completing final engineering drawings is a winning strategy to leverage funds from sources outside of state government. We want to duplicate this success in our communities. Open space and outdoor recreation is at a premium in the towns and cities we serve and DCR park space along the Mystic River represents a critically important resource to them.

State and Federal money arrives unexpectedly and so does large scale private development. It would have been difficult to predict even five years ago that an abandoned hazardous waste site on the Mystic River would become the focus of a \$1.5 billion dollar development proposal. But that is just what happened. Once final drawings are completed it seems clear that the Wynn Resort and other development projects in the future would readily incorporate substantial portions of DCR park planning into their proposed projects.

Work and improvements made in DCR Parklands will help accelerate the cleanup of a damaged ecosystem and will make significant contribution to the revitalization of the Mystic River waterfront and to restoration of natural habitat and water quality conditions. Finally completed construction documents for development of the Mystic River Master Plan will encourage both private developers and federal agencies to invest in facilities to enhance public use and enjoyment of the water. All this is enormously important in the Mystic River watershed where, as a result of unwelcoming conditions such as derelict docks and bulkheads, active industrial facilities and large numbers of hazardous waste sites, residents are cut off from recreational opportunities in the watershed and denied the many social and public benefits that engagement with this natural resource represents.

Efforts to build a regionally connected multi-modal transportation system will also be well served when Master Plan documents are finalized. The Master Plan provides detailed solutions to local transportation issues by connecting and expanding existing DCR pathways to surrounding neighborhoods and to the regional system and helps to fill in gaps along key local pedestrian and bicycle pathways.

Experts estimate that it will cost only \$250,000 to create the needed Engineering Drawings – a tiny sum compared with the many millions of dollars in river-side construction that the completion of these drawings will facilitate.

We are asking for you to include the needed additional \$250,000 in line item 2801-0100 in the FY2015 budget specifically for the purpose of completing these final drawings.

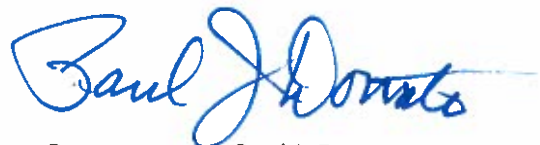
Now is the time to complete this important planning and engineering process to ensure that our region and our communities are prepared when new funding is announced and when the next large project is proposed to be built in this densely developed corridor.

Thank you for your kind consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,



Senator Patricia D. Jehlen  
2<sup>nd</sup> Middlesex District



Representative Paul J. Donato  
35<sup>th</sup> Middlesex District



Senator William N. Brownsberger  
2<sup>nd</sup> Suffolk & Middlesex District



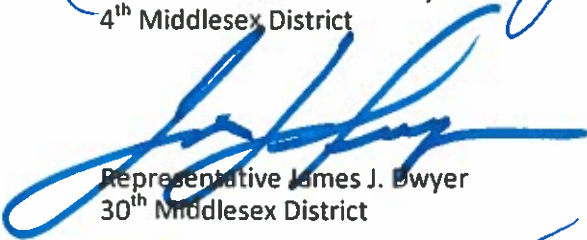
Representative Denise Provost  
27<sup>th</sup> Middlesex District



Senator Kenneth J. Donnelly  
4<sup>th</sup> Middlesex District



Representative Paul A. Brodeur  
32<sup>nd</sup> Middlesex District



Representative James J. Dwyer  
30<sup>th</sup> Middlesex District



Representative Sean Garballey  
23<sup>rd</sup> Middlesex District



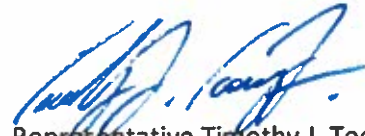
Representative Jason M. Lewis  
31<sup>st</sup> Middlesex District



Representative Dave M. Rogers  
24<sup>th</sup> Middlesex District



Representative Carl M. Sciortino  
34<sup>th</sup> Middlesex District



Representative Timothy J. Toomey Jr.  
26<sup>th</sup> Middlesex District