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PRESS RELEASE

Baker-Polito Administration Awards Over $10 Million for Dam and Seawall Projects

Funding to Twenty-Two Projects Will Increase Climate Change Resiliency Across Massachusetts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

10/24/2018

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IPSWICH — The Baker-Polito Administration today announced over $10.2 million in grants and loans to assist communities in addressing deteriorating dams and refurbishing critical coastal infrastructure. The awards, funded by the Dam and Seawall Repair or Removal Fund and the Governor's annual capital budget, include engineering phase or construction phase support for nine dam repair projects, five dam removals, and eight coastal protection reconstruction projects.

"The Dam and Seawall program provides vital support to our communities so they can better prepare themselves, their economy and natural resources for natural hazards like coastal and inland flooding," **said Governor Charlie Baker.** "Our administration was proud to recently pass a $2.4 billion bipartisan environmental bond bill that included over $500 million to help communities improve their resiliency to climate change and protect the environment."

"The significant funding awarded to communities and organizations through our Dam and Seawall Program is an important component of our administration's efforts to build resiliency across Massachusetts," **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito**. "By leveraging local investments, these grants and loans ensure municipalities are able to complete necessary infrastructure work and protect their communities from extreme weather."

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' (EEA) Dam and Seawall Program will award $10,265,932 in grants and loans to 22 projects to help finalize designs, reconstruct critical infrastructure, or remove obsolete or unneeded structures. Since its inception in 2013, the Dam and Seawall Program has awarded over $60 million in grant and loans to attend to this important infrastructure.

"Deteriorating dams and seawalls threaten the safety of residents, infrastructure, businesses, water supply, and the environment, and as a result we are committed to working with municipalities across the state to repair or remove these structures," **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton**. "Through this program, as well as our nation-leading Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program and State Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan, the Baker-Polito Administration has made preparing for the effects of climate change and increasing extreme weather events a priority."

The Dam and Seawall Program builds upon the Baker-Polito Administration's commitment to strengthen the resilience of communities throughout Massachusetts by coordinating assistance to cities and towns as they prepare for the impacts of climate change. Continuing this commitment, Governor Baker recently signed **legislation**(/news/governor-baker-signs-legislation-directing-24-billion-to-climate-change-adaptation) allocates over $2.4 billion for investments in safeguarding residents, municipalities and businesses from the impacts of climate change, protecting environmental resources, and investing in communities, and put into law essential components of Governor Baker's Executive Order 569 establishing an integrated strategy for climate change adaptation across the Commonwealth, including the **Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness grant program**(/news/baker-polito-administration-announces-municipal-vulnerability-preparedness-grant-program) and the **Statewide Hazard Mitigation and Adaptation Plan**(https://resilientma.com/).

Dams

City of Chicopee, Lower Bemis Pond Dam - $165,500 grant

- The City of Chicopee is currently planning a series of improvements to Szot Park. Abbey Brook – a tributary to the Chicopee River – runs through the park where two dams are situated. The Chicopee River confluence is just 900 feet downstream and the confluence with the Connecticut River is approximately 1.25 miles away. The dam is classified as a significant hazard structure in poor condition. The dam was built in the 1860's to create an ice pond and it has not had a use in many years. A Chicopee Electric Light facility is downstream of the dam and would likely be damaged in the event of a failure. The water quality in the creek is poor. Removal of the dam will improve safety and ecological conditions while relieving the City of the maintenance and repair expense. This award will support advanced design and permitting for the project.

The Nature Conservancy, High Street Dam - $105,868 grant

- The Nature Conservancy is working with the Town of Bridgewater and the private owner to remove the High Street Dam on the Town River. The Town River joins the Matfield River in Bridgewater to form the Taunton River. The Taunton is the longest undammed coastal river in the state and is the subject of a years-long effort by state, federal, local, and nonprofit partners to restore connectivity and water quality throughout the

watershed. This dam removal represents the last major project in the effort and will serve to connect Narragansett Bay to high quality herring spawning habitat in Lake Nippenicket. Similar projects have been completed in the watershed, effectively connecting all of the major freshwater bodies with supportive habitat to the ocean. In addition to the many ecological benefits associated with the project, the dam has been classified as a significant hazard class structure in poor condition. Removal of the structure will eliminate a financial burden for the owners. Public access to an adjacent public park will be improved.

City of Springfield, Upper Van Horn Dam - $84,000 grant

- The Upper Van Horn Dam is a significant hazard class structure in poor condition. It is situated upstream of the Baystate Medical Center – one of the most important health care facilities in Western Massachusetts. The Dam and Seawall Program recently supported repair of the Lower Van Horn Dam to reduce the risk of failure of that high hazard class structure. There is concern that a failure at the upper dam could damage the lower dam. Repair of the upper dam will further reduce the risk to downstream assets such as the Medical Center, I-91, and a key railroad corridor. The dam is located in the popular Van Horn Park and the impoundment is used for recreational purposes. This award will support design and permitting work to address deficiencies at the structure.

Neponset River Land Holding Association, Willett Pond Dam - $172,000 grant

- Willett Pond Dam is located in a densely developed area of Walpole, Norwood, and Westwood. It is classified as a high hazard structure in poor condition. The impoundment is 220 acres in size and there is a well-travelled road across the crest. The key area of concern with this dam is the adequacy of the spillway. In the event of intense precipitation, the spillway cannot convey enough water downstream in a controlled manner. This could lead to flooding around the impoundment or damage to the structure as the water would overflow in undesired locations. This award will support the design and permitting phase for a project to increase spillway capacity and safety for the areas downstream of the dam and around the impoundment.

Town of Ashburnham, Whitney Pond Dam - $140,000 grant

- The Whitney Pond Dam in the Town of Ashburnham is classified as a significant hazard structure in poor condition. The dam does not have a current use and the small size of the impoundment and the location present very limited recreational opportunities. Given these factors, the Town has elected to remove the dam to improve safety and ecological conditions. This award will support the development of designs and permit applications for the removal of the structure. Removal of the dam will reduce risk to nearby roads and railroads and benefit cold water fishery habitat in the area.

City of Northampton, Frances Ryan Reservoir Dam and West Whately Reservoir Dam -

$250,000 grant

- The Frances Ryan Reservoir Dam and West Whately Reservoir Dam are key elements of the Northampton water supply. The dams are both categorized as high hazard class structures. While both dams are considered to be in fair physical condition, there is concern over their ability to manage intense precipitation via their spillways. Uncontrolled overflows from the structures could compromise the integrity of the dams and reduce or interrupt the ability to provide drinking water. The award will support design and permitting for improvements to spillway capacity, improve stability of the downstream slope, and address seepage issues.

Town of Ipswich, Dow Reservoir Dam - $711,954 grant

- Dow Reservoir Dam is an important element of the Town of Ipswich's water supply system. Built in 1894, it is the largest reservoir in Ipswich and it supports over half of the town's surface water. The dam sits directly above the Ipswich Electric Light Department 9.2MW generating station and distribution substation. The dam's immediate proximity to Route 1A is also a major safety concern. The dam was recently downgraded to "unsafe" physical condition due to a substantial seepage. For safety reasons, the town has closed public access to the dam crest which is part of a popular trail system. The project will include placement of a new sheet pile core wall, adding material to the downstream slope to improve the steep gradient, install a toe drain, and raise the dam by two feet. This work will return the dam to compliance with safety standards.

Town of Weymouth, Weymouth Great Pond Dam - $782,700 grant

- The Weymouth Great Pond Reservoir was constructed in 1884 and continues to serve as an important component of the Weymouth water supply system. The dam is classified as a significant hazard and is in fair physical condition. There are physical deficiencies with the dam that will be addressed through this project but the primary concern is in inadequate capacity of the spillway. The spillway and its associated culvert under Randolph Street are not large enough to accommodate intense precipitation events. This could result in flooding of Randolph Street as well as damage to the dam structure from overtopping. The award will support construction of an auxiliary spillway to reduce the risk of overtopping. The culvert will be replaced to reduce the risk of road flooding and existing deficiencies in the dam will be repaired.

City of Westfield, Tekoa Dam - $396,000 grant

- The City of Westfield recently evaluated its water supply system and has been retiring elements that no longer serve the needs of the system. Due to its small reservoir capacity, the Tekoa Reservoir Dam in Montgomery has not been used for water supply purposes since the 1920s. In addition to improved safety and savings on maintenance and repairs for the city, there are strong ecological benefits. When the dam is removed, 2.3 miles of coldwater habitat in Moose Meadow Brook will be connected to the rest of the watershed.

City of Pittsfield, Mill Street Dam - $400,000 grant

- The City of Pittsfield is working with a private owner to remove the Mill Street Dam (aka Tel-Electric Dam). This structure in downtown Pittsfield is in poor condition. Key railroad bridges carrying CSX and Amtrak are near the site. While this structure does not pose a high risk in the event of a failure, it does interrupt aquatic habitat on the Housatonic River and provide for blight and an attractive nuisance. Crime and at least one drowning have occurred at this location. A portion of the plan – to be funded by others – is to remove an unused railroad bridge from the site which will open sight lines and improve safety. Ecological benefits include the connection of five miles of habitat to the mainstem of the Housatonic River. The City hopes to revitalize this section of the city with improved river access and increased recreation.

Town of Rutland, Moulton Pond Dam - $1,000,000 grant and loan

- The Moulton Pond Dam in Rutland is a high hazard class structure in unsafe physical condition. A main thoroughfare, Route 56 or Pommogussett Road, travels the crest of the dam. Funds will be used to completely replace the spillway, construct a new culvert under Route 56, construct a new outlet, construct a low-level outlet, and perform repairs to the embankment. This project, combined with roadway improvements will improve safety conditions on this important road.

Town of Brookline, Brookline Reservoir Dam - $400,000 grant

- The Brookline Reservoir Dam is a high hazard classification structure in poor physical condition. The reservoir was originally constructed in 1848 for drinking water supply but is now used for recreational purposes. The structure is located in a highly urbanized location and a failure could threaten homes, major transportation corridors, and commercial properties. This award will support the repair of low level outlets and water controls to improve safe manipulation of water level in the reservoir. Repairs to the granite armoring on the upstream slope will also be supported.

Town of Auburn, Leesville Pond Dam - $188,800 grant

- The Leesville Pond Dam in Auburn is classified as a significant hazard potential structure in poor condition. Originally constructed in 1830, the dam is upstream of residences, Route 12, railroads, and another dam classified as high hazard. There is concern that a failure at the Leesville Dam would impact the downstream Curtis Dam which is located in the densely developed Webster Square area of Worcester. The project will remove trees and vegetation, repair concrete dam elements, and install armoring to the toe and slope to address erosion.

City of New Bedford, Buttonwood Park Dam – $1,000,000 loan

- The Buttonwood Park Dam lies within the City's historic Buttonwood Park. The dam was originally constructed in 1902 for irrigation and flood control purposes. The primary current use is recreation. It is classified as a significant hazard potential structure in poor condition. A roadway runs across the crest of the dam and is a convenient crossing of the park. The structure has numerous deficiencies and the proponent seeks to substantially rebuild much of the spillway, install armoring as overtopping protection, rebuild culverts under the roadway, and perform other repairs.

Coastal Structures

City of Quincy, Houghs Neck Seawall - $225,000 grant

- The City of Quincy has been working on design, engineering, and permitting for a series of seawalls along Houghs Neck and Adams Shore for several years with the support of the Dam and Seawall program. There are over 10,000 linear feet of structures in need of repair or reconstruction. This award should complete the design and permit phase for the entire program.

City of New Bedford, West Rodney French Boulevard - $134,460 grant

- The City of New Bedford owns a number of coastal structures along West Rodney French Boulevard including seawalls and groins. These structures protect the major roadway but also protect the seven foot diameter sewer trunk line that lies beneath the road. The line is the primary conduit to the wastewater treatment plan and carries the waste water for the entire city. The primary concern is that if the seawall were to fail, the aging sewer line could be exposed to waves and debris, risking failure. The seawall is deteriorating and a full reconstruction is not feasible. Instead, the City will use a combination of groin improvements and beach nourishment to reduce impacts to the West Rodney French Boulevard. This award will be utilized to complete the design and permitting of the project, bring it to construction-ready status.

Town of Marshfield, Brant Rock Seawall - $94,500 grant

- The Town of Marshfield recently completed a full reconstruction of the northern section of the Brant Rock Seawall. The 600-linear-foot section had experienced dramatic failure in 2015 and the commercial center of Brant Rock has flooded repeatedly. That project raised the wall by 3.5 feet to protect from rising sea levels and more intense storms. The Town is now planning to perform similar work on the 630 linear foot southern section of the Brant Rock wall. The section from North Street to South Street was constructed sometime prior to 1940 and is highly deteriorated. There are numerous homes and businesses situated behind the wall. Of particular interest is protection of Ocean Street which is a major road and evacuation route for residents of the Brant Rock area. This award will advance deigns and permits for the reconstruction of the seawall.

Town of Winthrop, Pico Avenue Seawalls - $100,000 grant

- The Town of Winthrop experienced severe flooding in the Pico Avenue area during the January 2018 winter storm. There are some coastal protection structures but they were overwhelmed by the waves and storm surge. This award will be used to explore protection options for reducing flooding in the neighborhood.

Town of Essex, Conomo Point Seawall - $65,650 grant

- The Conomo Point Seawall in Essex is located within Essex Bay. Much of the area surrounding the point is made up of salt marsh and highly productive clam flats. The seawall on the point is now in a deteriorated state and suffered failures in the winter 2018 storms. Of particular importance at this location is the presence of a boat launch used by the Essex emergency services and the Massachusetts Environmental Police. In many tide conditions, other launches in the town are not usable and this is the most viable launch site. The seawall helps to protect Conomo Point Road – the only land access to the launch site. Conomo Point Road is also the route used by many of the town's commercial shellfishermen to bring their product to market. This award will be used to develop plans and obtain permits for repairs to this seawall system.

Town of Duxbury, Duxbury Beach Seawall - $3,000,000 grant and loan

- The Duxbury Beach Seawall suffered substantial damage and failures during the Nor'easters of March 2018. The walls front over 30 residences and Gurnet Road. This project would repair or replace 800 linear feet of seawall in areas that have failed. The height of the wall will be raised to increase protection from higher sea level and storms. Gurnet Road is the only full access to the communities in the subject area and at the south end of Duxbury Beach. Although the Gurnet/Saquish communities are in Plymouth, all heavy equipment must access the beach via Marshfield due to the limitations of the Powder Point Bridge in Duxbury. This includes fire apparatus and earth moving equipment that would be required to make emergency repairs to the beach in the event of a breach. In many cases, Gurnet Road could be the only viable evacuation route for the 300 residences along Duxbury Beach.

Town of Rockport, Long Beach Seawall and Revetment - $750,000 grant

- The Long Beach Seawall in Rockport suffered substantial damage over the winter of 2018. This structure had already been designated for substantial repair and the Dam and Seawall program awarded a design and permit grant in fiscal year 2018. The entire 3,300-foot structure is beyond its useful lifespan. There are 154 homes behind the seawall and the beach in front of the wall is a popular public recreation site. This project will implement key stabilization work on the wall and will serve to protect homes and the wetlands behind until a longer term solution is developed and financed. Repairs will include placement of new revetment seaward of the existing wall and addition of 8,000 yards of sand to nourish the beach. The existing wall segments will remain in place and these segments, plus the new revetment, can be incorporated into future structures.

Town of Oak Bluffs, East Chop Bluff Revetment - $100,000 grant

- The Town of Oak Bluffs is experiencing significant erosion on East Chop Bluff. This iconic landscape rises high above the ocean but is facing significant degradation of the land form from both the ocean and the land above. The base of the bluff is armored with a stone revetment dating back to the 1930's that is in deteriorated condition and does not provide adequate protection. As the bank has eroded, it has damaged East Chop Drive to the extent that it has been closed to most traffic. The road is a key travel route in Oak Bluffs and is a popular and scenic location for tourism. Many homes are situated on the landward side of the road. The Town is developing plans for a robust suite of work in this area to reconstruct and raise a large area of coastal structures. This award will support the permitting for the project to advance it to construction ready.

"Climate resiliency is a priority for the House and these awards provide communities across the Commonwealth with the funds to make critical environmental investments," **said House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo (D-Winthrop).** "As we hasten efforts to improve our climate preparedness and resiliency, this investment will put us on the path to better protecting our communities now and planning for the future."

"Dams and seawalls are critical pieces of infrastructure for public safety, the protection of our natural resources and our quality of life. Since constructing and maintaining them is costly, it's imperative that state government partner with our communities to get the job done, and these grants do just that," **said Senate Minority Leader Bruce Tarr (R-Gloucester)**.

“I’m very pleased that the Town of Bridgewater will benefit from this $105,868 grant to help remove the High Street Dam,” **said Senate President Pro Tempore Marc R. Pacheco (D-Taunton).** “The dam is an unsafe impediment to the natural ecosystem that has contributed to local flooding. These efforts will make the High Street Bridge safer and allow the river to flow naturally and uninterrupted. I’d like to thank everyone who participated in the application process and look forward to seeing the results.”

“Thank you to the Baker-Polito Administration, and Secretary Beaton, for your work to protect our communities throughout the Commonwealth with these extremely impactful dam and seawall grants,” **said State Representative Brad Hill (R-Ipswich).** “I am thrilled to see the Town of Ipswich receive a grant for repairs to the Dow Reservoir Dam, a critical component of the town’s water supply system.”

“I want to congratulate the towns for receiving these much needed grant funds,” **said State Senator Anne Gobi (D-Spencer).** “There is a lot of work to be done to address the current state of dams and seawalls across the state and the Baker-Polito Administration, along with Secretary Beaton, are doing great work to support those efforts.”

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