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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
April 22, 2019

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Commonwealth Celebrates Earth Day with Milestone in Climate Change Planning Program, Local Dam Removal Project

Administration Announces \$725,000 to Help 27 Communities Plan for Climate Change Impacts



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PLYMOUTH – The Baker-Polito Administration today awarded \$725,000 to 27 communities to complete climate change vulnerability assessments and develop resiliency plans through the [Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness \(MVP\) program](#), bringing the number of communities in the program to 184, or half of all Massachusetts municipalities. The grant and designation program, which builds on Governor Baker’s Executive Order 569 as well as other administration-led state and local partnerships, provides communities with technical support, climate change data and planning tools to identify hazards and develop strategies to improve resilience. This is the third round of the program’s planning grants, and the [funding round](#) will remain open until May 4, 2019 on a first-come, first-serve basis. Governor Charlie Baker made the announcement at an event celebrating the removal of the Holmes Dam in Plymouth and highlighting the Administration’s efforts to combat and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

“As we celebrate Earth Day, we are proud to announce that half of Massachusetts’ communities have partnered with the Commonwealth through the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program to take action and fund projects to prepare for climate resiliency,” **said Governor Charlie Baker**. “We look forward to working with our colleagues in the Legislature to continue the Commonwealth’s leadership on climate change through our proposal to provide \$1.3 billion over ten years to local resiliency projects that will protect vital infrastructure.”

“Today’s milestone highlights the success of the administration’s innovative MVP program and continued work to address resiliency and climate change at the local and state level,” **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito**. “Thank you to the 184 cities and towns across Massachusetts that are working hand-in-hand with our administration to implement nature-based, cost-effective solutions to build resiliency and safeguard the Commonwealth’s residents, businesses and infrastructure.”

This funding is part of the largest release of climate change resilience funding for Massachusetts communities in state history, as the Baker-Polito Administration recently [announced](#) the availability of \$10 million for the MVP Program. Through this program, municipalities work through a community-based workshop process to identify key climate-related hazards, vulnerabilities and strengths, develop adaptation actions, and prioritize next steps. Results of the workshops and planning efforts inform existing local plans, grant applications, and policies, such as local hazard mitigation plans. Communities are then eligible for MVP Action Grant funding to implement priority on-the-ground projects.

“The continued growth of the MVP Program demonstrates communities’ interest and readiness to address the growing challenge of climate change,” **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton**. “We are eager to work with all cities and towns across the Commonwealth to identify their priority resilience actions and get those projects off the ground.”

The following communities will receive funding to complete the MVP planning process in 2019:

Municipality	Total Award
Ayer	\$35,000
Bellingham/Franklin	\$48,000
Danvers	\$24,000
Dartmouth	\$23,000

Dighton	\$22,000
Dover	\$27,000
Greenfield	\$22,000
Groveland	\$25,000
Holliston	\$15,000
Hopkinton	\$29,000
Leominster	\$25,000
Lynnfield	\$15,000
Marshfield	\$19,000
Mashpee	\$15,000
Northborough	\$15,000
Norwell	\$24,000
Paxton	\$25,130
Plymouth	\$72,000
Rutland	\$34,000
Saugus	\$33,000
Somerset	\$17,000
South Hadley	\$25,000
Taunton	\$43,000
Wakefield	\$56,000
Westwood	\$15,000
Winchester	\$22,000
TOTAL	\$725,130

The 184 MVP-designated municipalities are eligible for MVP Action Grants to implement on-the-ground projects identified through the planning process to build the community's resilience to climate change impacts. Projects are focused on proactive strategies to address climate change impacts and include retrofitting and adapting infrastructure, detailed vulnerability assessments or design and engineering studies, stormwater upgrades, dam retrofits and removals, culvert upgrades, drought mitigation, actions to protect environmental justice communities and improve public health, energy resilience, and strategies that focus on implementing nature-based solutions such as wetland restoration and floodplain protection. Communities are eligible for up to \$2 million per project to address ongoing climate change impacts like sea level rise, inland flooding, storms, and extreme temperatures.

The removal of Holmes Dam is the final project in an over a decade long restoration initiative including several complex dam removals and bridge replacements along the Town Brook, located upstream from the Pilgrim's Trail and Plymouth Rock. The Baker-Polito Administration has committed over \$1.38 million and provided technical assistance to the dam removal and restoration initiative. Removal of the Holmes Dam will restore and enhance self-sustaining populations of migratory fish, eliminate a potential public hazard, and enhance significant social and recreational benefits through the project's additions to the Town Brook Greenway and the Pilgrim Trail.

“Our communities realize how important it is to plan for weather related events that have an effect on all facets of community life,” **said State Senator Anne Gobi (D-Spencer)**. “I especially want to congratulate the towns of Rutland and Paxton for being proactive in this critical planning.”

“Thank you to the Baker-Polito Administration and the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs for awarding these funds and recognizing the importance of promoting sustainability by encouraging climate change preparedness in communities across Massachusetts,” **said State Representative Kimberly Ferguson (R-Holden)**. “I am thrilled that Rutland and Paxton were chosen as recipients and congratulations to all of the communities who received grants.”

“As the impacts of climate change become more apparent, it’s more important than ever that our communities have the tools necessary to identify risks to local resources and take action,” **said State Representative Carolyn Dykema (D- Holliston)**. “This funding will provide crucial support to municipalities in their long-term planning efforts, and I’m pleased that Holliston and Hopkinton will be able to expand on their work to build resilience locally.”

The Baker-Polito Administration has committed \$19 million in total to improving community resilience across the Commonwealth. Governor Baker recently filed the [Resilient MA legislation](#) to support municipalities and help protect Massachusetts residents, communities, economy, and infrastructure from the adverse effects of climate change, through a modest increase in the excise on real estate transfers to fund a substantial and sustained investment in climate change adaptation. The revenue would be directed towards investments in resilient infrastructure to help make communities safer, keep vital services online, reduce the long-term costs of climate-related risks and protect the value of property across the Commonwealth. The proposal is estimated to generate \$1.3 billion over 10 years which would be dedicated to the Commonwealth’s Global Warming Solutions Trust Fund to provide funding for resiliency initiatives including grants and technical assistance to communities for implementing priority actions identified through the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program and addressing climate-related risk in cities and towns throughout the state.

In August of 2018, Governor Baker signed [legislation](#) which put into law essential components of Governor Baker’s Executive Order 569, including the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness grant program and the Statewide Hazard Mitigation and Adaptation Plan, as well as authorizing over \$2.4 billion in capital allocations for investments in safeguarding residents, municipalities and businesses from the impacts of climate change, protecting environmental resources, and investing in communities.

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