

Department of Fish and Game

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Karyn Polito, *Lt. Governor*



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Baker-Polito Administration Helps Cities and Towns Upgrade Road-Stream Crossings

Projects Will Improve River Health and Increase Community Resilience to Climate Change

PALMER – The Baker-Polito Administration today announced \$750,000 in awards to support local culvert replacement projects that improve municipal infrastructure and river health. The grants are provided by the Department of Fish and Game’s Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) through its Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance grant program, and are intended to strengthen community preparedness for large storm events, protect fisheries and river habitats, and promote smart investments in climate-ready infrastructure.

“Replacing important infrastructure like culverts is a critical component of public safety and preparing for climate change,” **said Governor Charlie Baker**. “Our administration is proud to support cities and towns across the Commonwealth making important investments in culvert projects that will make their roads safer, while protecting natural habitats.”

“Cities and towns across Massachusetts are already working hard to safeguard their residents, economies and environmental resources from the impacts of climate change,” **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito**. “The Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Grant Program’s funding and technical assistance helps cities

and towns complete important infrastructure upgrades that will connect critical river and wetland habitats and support storm readiness.”

Nearly half of Massachusetts’ estimated 30,000 culverts act as barriers to fish and wildlife because they are undersized and/or poorly positioned. Undersized culverts can also present a serious risk to public safety. As high-intensity rainfall becomes more frequent and severe due to climate change, culvert bottlenecks can cause flood waters to overtop roads, resulting in washouts and road closures.

Installing culverts that meet the Massachusetts Stream Crossing Standards allows rivers to flow unrestricted and with lower risk of flood damage. Recent studies have found that culverts designed to meet these standards are often less expensive than in-kind culvert replacements over the lifespan of the structure. The purpose of DER’s Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Grant Program is to encourage and help municipalities to replace existing culverts with crossings that meet improved design standards for fish and wildlife passage, river health, and storm resiliency.

“Flooding and aging infrastructure are two of the most serious challenges facing cities and towns across the Commonwealth,” **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton**. “Through this grant program, we are partnering with communities across the state to help municipal road managers fix deteriorating infrastructure while reducing public safety risks and supporting wildlife in rivers, streams and wetland habitats.”

“River restoration through culvert replacement provides multiple benefits to fish and wildlife, including improved water quality, expanded habitat for aquatic life, and improved fisheries for local anglers,” **said Department of Fish and Game Commissioner Ron Amidon**.

The following 13 projects were awarded grants through the 2018 Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Grants Program:

Buckland - \$91,000: The Town of Buckland will conduct field data collection, engineering and design, and permitting for a culvert replacement on Clark Brook. Replacing the culvert will provide passage for fish and wildlife and improve Buckland’s public safety by maintaining access for emergency and residential services to nearby homes.

Colrain - \$150,000: The Town of Colrain will construct a 12-ft open-bottom culvert on a tributary to the North River. Replacing the existing undersized culvert will provide passage for fish and wildlife, and improve Colrain’s infrastructure by reducing the risk of culvert failure.

Dighton - \$92,346: The City of Dighton will conduct field data collection and analysis, design and engineering, and permitting for a culvert replacement on Sunken Brook. Upgrading the culvert will reduce runoff and erosion, improve crossings for wildlife, and reduce public safety and flooding hazard risks.

Fall River - \$35,000: The City of Fall River will conduct field data collection and analysis for a culvert replacement project on Middle Brook. Replacing these culverts will improve fish and wildlife passage and Fall River's infrastructure and storm resilience.

Granville - \$25,000: The Town of Granville will conduct field data collection and analysis for a culvert replacement project on Phelon Brook. Replacing this road-stream crossing will improve fish passage and Granville's infrastructure, as well as protect the City of Springfield's downstream drinking water supply.

Ipswich - \$29,000: The Town of Ipswich will conduct field data collection and analysis for a culvert replacement project on Gravelly Brook. Replacing the culvert will provide passage for fish and wildlife and will improve Ipswich's infrastructure resilience and reduce maintenance costs.

Northampton - \$65,250: The City of Northampton will conduct field data collection and analysis, and engineering and design for a culvert replacement on a tributary to Bassett Brook. The stream crossing upgrade will improve stream habitat, increase flood resilience, and reduce safety risks and infrastructure maintenance.

Palmer - \$34,000: The Town of Palmer will conduct field data collection, engineering and design, and permitting for a culvert replacement on a tributary to the Ware River. Upgrading the crossing will improve water quality, stream habitat, and Palmer's infrastructure and storm resilience, and reduce the threat of storm damage to the primary access between the MassPike and Bondsville Industrial Park and UMass Amherst.

Princeton - \$22,513: The Town of Princeton will finalize design, engineering, and permitting for a culvert replacement on the South Wachusett Brook. Replacing the culvert will provide passage for fish and wildlife and improve Princeton's infrastructure and storm resilience by reducing flood impacts.

Stockbridge - \$46,000: The Town of Stockbridge will conduct field data collection and analysis for a culvert replacement on Marsh Brook. Replacing the culvert will provide fish and wildlife passage, and will improve Sheffield's infrastructure and storm

resilience by reducing flood impacts and maintaining access to Tanglewood – the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Tyngsborough - \$45,000: The Town of Tyngsborough will conduct field data collection and analysis and preliminary engineering for a culvert replacement on Bridge Meadow Brook. Replacing the culvert will provide fish and wildlife passage, and will improve Tyngsborough's infrastructure and storm resilience by maintaining access to emergency shelters and community services.

Ware - \$37,300: The Town of Ware will conduct field data collection, engineering and design, and permitting for a culvert replacement on a tributary to Flat Brook. Replacing the culvert will provide passage for fish and wildlife and will improve Ware's flood resiliency and reduce maintenance costs.

Windsor - \$77,591: The Town of Windsor will conduct field data collection and analysis, design and engineering, and permitting for a culvert replacement on a tributary to the East Branch of the Westfield River. Replacing the culvert will provide passage for resident brook trout and other fish and wildlife species, enhance public safety and increase storm resiliency.

The statewide Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Grant Program is supported by DER's Capital Budget. The New England Forests and Rivers Fund administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service is providing support to DER for grant development and technical assistance for projects located in the Deerfield River Watershed.

"Our towns and highway departments spend a lot of time and money dealing with faulty culverts and the negative effects on public safety, water quality and aquatic life," **said State Senator Anne Gobi, Co-Chair of the Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture (D-Spencer)**. "These grants provide necessary funding to alleviate many problems, I am glad to support funding and to work with the administration on these projects."

"I would like to thank the Baker-Polito Administration for their continued support of communities like Palmer and Ware," **said State Representative Todd Smola (R-Warren)**. "These projects will not only improve fish and wildlife habitats but also safeguard local roads and infrastructure."

"Thank you to the Mass Department of Fish and Game for providing this funding to the Town of Ware," **said State Representative Donald Berthiaume (R-Spencer)**. "This

grant will help Ware continue to repair its infrastructure at the same time it's solving ecological issues in this area."

"I'm very pleased that Dighton will be receiving this \$92,346 Culvert Municipal Assistance Grant," **said Senate President Pro Tempore Marc R. Pacheco (D-Taunton)**. "These funds will help the town upgrade the Brigg Street culverts and create a plan to manage and prevent future erosion. As the global climate crisis continues to affect our state, funds such as these will be vital resources for local communities in the Commonwealth. I'd like to thank everyone involved in the grant process and look forward to seeing the program's positive results in our district."

"The Briggs Street project has long been necessary and is a very important endeavor," **said State Representative Patricia A. Haddad, Speaker Pro Tempore (D-Somerset)**. "The town of Dighton often experiences flooding and run-off issues and this much-needed grant will aid in controlling problems while being sensitive to the ecosystem within the Taunton watershed."

The mission of the Division of Ecological Restoration is to restore and protect the Commonwealth's rivers, wetlands and watersheds for the benefit of people and the environment. DER's Stream Continuity Program helps municipalities replace undersized culverts with better designed structures that meet ecological and public safety criteria, ultimately resulting in improvements to stream connectivity and a reduction in roadway and flood hazards.

The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) is responsible for promoting the conservation and enjoyment of the Commonwealth's natural resources. DFG carries out this mission through land protection and wildlife habitat management, management of inland and marine fish and wildlife species, and ecological restoration of fresh water, salt water, and terrestrial habitats. DFG promotes enjoyment of the Massachusetts environment through outdoor skills workshops, fishing festivals and other educational programs, and by enhancing access to the Commonwealth's rivers, lakes, and coastal waters.

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