



April 10, 2020

Dear Massachusetts Congressional Delegation:

On behalf of Mass Audubon, I want to thank you for your extraordinary efforts during this time of a global pandemic to ensure our country's safety and to mitigate any economic downturn. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act is going to play an incredible role in the recovery of America, but we need to keep pushing forward to continue to invest in our economy in a smart and sustainable manner.

The protection of land and water is crucial for the health and wellness of all people and is an important aspect of many small businesses. Investing in clean energy and sustainable development will create crucial jobs and stimulate the nation's recovery. I ask that you review the following recommendations to be included in any potential infrastructure-based stimulus package to ensure that all new programs protect our natural resources.

America's Transportation Infrastructure Act of 2019 (S.2302)

Continuing to invest in our nation's critical transportation infrastructure will be key to increase jobs during our nation's recovery. The America's Transportation Infrastructure Act lays out many important provisions that should be retained in any final infrastructure bill. S.2303 ensures that any investment in infrastructure will consider the resilience of natural lands, investments in electric vehicle infrastructure, and protecting critical wildlife crossings that will increase safety and protect many species from unnecessary deaths.

Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)

Low-income and vulnerable citizens are often the ones who need weatherization assistance the most but have the least access to it. The Weatherization Assistance Program helps low-income families by providing funding to states to assist local nonprofits offering low-cost home weatherization upgrades.

Great American Outdoors Act (S.3422)

This Great American Outdoors Act would provide permanent full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). With Congress having already passed into law permanent LWCF reauthorization, the Great American Outdoors Act would solidify the permanent existence and full funding of one of the most important land conservation programs this nation has.

NOAA Ocean and Coastal Restoration

The protection and restoration of our salt marshes, tidal basins, reefs, and barrier beaches is critical to the protection of businesses and communities from storm surges, floods, and rising sea levels. Previous protection and restoration of these areas has created thousands of jobs.

FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)

The FEMA BRIC program assists states and local communities with hazard mitigation projects that reduce the risks they face from disasters and other natural hazards. For each dollar invested in disaster risk protection, roughly \$7 is saved in reduced damage. Providing additional funds for BRIC communities will enable them to undertake more nature-based projects to increase their reliance to natural disasters.

Additionally, I ask that you expand the Paycheck Protection Program through December 2020 and to allow nonprofits of over 500 employees to partake. With 38,000 acres of conservation land spread out over 60 wildlife sanctuaries and with approximately 225,000 adults and children attending our programs and summer camps each year, Mass Audubon employs a significant part-time work force. The vast majority of our annual revenue is brought in by these critical part-time employees, who are unable to run their community-based programs during the pandemic. If the Paycheck Protection Program were extended and expanded, we could continue to provide virtual programming to children throughout the summer without having to risk the financial future of our organization.

Thank you,

Jack Clarke
Director of Public Policy & Government Relations