



May 20, 2009

The Honorable Therese Murray  
Senate President  
State House - Room 330  
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Steven C. Panagiotakos  
Chairman, Senate Ways and Means Committee  
State House - Room 212  
Boston, MA 02133

**RE: Department of Conservation and Recreation FY10 Budget**

Dear President Murray and Senator Panagiotakos:

The Stewardship Council of the Department of Conservation and Recreation understands the financial challenges our Commonwealth now faces and the very significant, difficult decisions we all need to make given the reduction in state revenues. Indeed, we believe that DCR, since its inception, has done an excellent job in managing declining budgets in a manner that provides visitors with safe and memorable experiences at DCR facilities throughout the state – despite financial constraints.

The proposed reductions in DCR's operating budget, most recently set by the Senate at \$11 million below a "maintenance budget," are going to require that the agency employ a different strategy than it has in the past. We believe DCR will need to seriously consider closing and shuttering certain properties, if not all properties of a certain type (e.g. all pools, as some cities are planning, all streetlights, etc), in order to live within the significantly smaller operating budgets under consideration by the Senate.

We understand DCR's need to "do its part" to strive for greater operational efficiency and tighten its belt, as it has so often in the past. But we also recognize that many citizens will be shocked and disappointed when their favorite facilities are closed. If the reductions suggested in the Senate Bill are what is required to meet the fiscal demands upon the Commonwealth, DCR will need to look at significant reductions in its operations. We have asked the Department to consider reductions that ensure our parks and facilities throughout the state remain as broadly available as possible to our citizens. While this is a seemingly insurmountable task for Commissioner Sullivan and his staff, the Stewardship Council recognizes the critical importance of providing the public with safe, reliable facilities and parks in which to escape the tensions of the current recession.

Sincerely,

Richard R. Cross  
Chairman

cc: House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo  
Chairman Charles A. Murphy, Chairman  
EOEA Secretary Ian Bowles  
DCR Commissioner Rick Sullivan  
Legislative Parks Caucus

