

Mass Ready Act – Strengthening Our Infrastructure



Healey-Driscoll Administration

Introduction

The Mass Ready Act strengthens our infrastructure and prepares our communities for extreme weather. With substantial funding committed to strengthening flood control systems, upgrading dams and seawalls, and revitalizing waterways, Massachusetts is putting a down payment on a more secure and sustainable future. At the same time, enhancements to state parks, recreational facilities, and multi-use trails reflect a commitment to equitable access and environmental stewardship.

From aligning building codes with housing and climate resilience priorities and streamlining permitting processes, to protecting natural habitats and investing in port and river resilience, this comprehensive plan positions Massachusetts as a national leader in adaptive, sustainable development. The opportunity is clear: by acting now, we not only safeguard our environment and infrastructure, but also build a stronger, more resilient Massachusetts for future generations.

Infrastructure Investments

Investing in our shared public spaces and infrastructure is more than maintenance — it's a commitment to safer communities, a healthier environment, and a stronger economy. With over \$2.9 billion in targeted funding, the Mass Ready Act supports critical improvements across our state's parks, transportation networks, natural resources, and infrastructure. Prioritizing long-term impact, the Act will protect vital community assets and enhance public safety now and in the future.

- **\$764 million to support publicly owned properties, including:**
 - **\$587 million** to protect and enhance essential community resources like parks, trails, beaches, and historic sites—through planning, design, construction, and repair.
 - **\$177 million** to support transportation infrastructure, including parkways, trails, roads, and pedestrian bridges. Additionally, improvements are authorized for pedestrian and bicycle safety, traffic mitigation, lighting,

accessibility, and landscape upgrades, all in alignment with state hazard mitigation and climate adaptation needs.

- **\$90 million** for the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to repair and modernize infrastructure, including boat ramps and fish hatcheries. Funds will also support our commercial fisheries and continue crucial ecological restoration projects.
- **\$73 million** for improvements to infrastructure and facilities that support the development and implementation of the ResilientMass state hazard mitigation and climate adaptation strategy.
- **\$28 million** for Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to address solid waste and decrease pollution.

Flood Control

As we have seen increasingly in recent years, flooding is increasingly a threat to the Massachusetts way of life. Communities like Leominster and our Connecticut River Valley farms saw devastating floods in 2023, requiring emergency disaster relief to rebuild. Proactive investments in flood prevention significantly reduce disaster recovery costs, maintain essential services, and safeguard public health. For example, the Act includes the requirement of disclosures during home sales and lease signings of flood risk and past damages. This has been established in many other states, and its absence here has historically left homebuyers and renters vulnerable to repetitive flood-related risks.

The Act's other investments support long-term resilience and economic stability, especially in our most vulnerable and underserved communities.

- **\$601.6 million** in authorizations to protect communities from increasing flood risks and coastal erosion include:
 - **\$308.1 million** to manage high-risk state-owned or abandoned dams, inland flood control systems, and coastal and marine infrastructure—including shore protection, docks, beaches, and salt marshes. It also supports projects that enhance the navigational and ecological function of waterways.

- **\$200 million** to implement ResilientCoasts recommendations, which include supporting regional Resilience Districts in developing and advancing priority flood protection projects.
- **\$93.5 million** to manage municipally and state-owned dams, as well as inland flood control infrastructure. This includes projects such as seawalls, jetties, revetments, beach nourishment, and nature-based solutions that enhance climate resilience on public lands. Funds will also invest in improvements to aquatic habitats.

Additionally, the Act supports the creation of a **Connecticut River Valley Resilience Commission**, which empowers communities to collaborate and develop a regional strategy for tackling flood risk and updating aging flood infrastructure along the Connecticut River. The plan will identify regional resilience projects, develop estimated costs and timelines, and make recommendations for local and regional action.

Further, the Mass Ready Act authorizes **expedited permitting processes and timelines for municipal culvert replacements** that integrate resilience standards. This will accelerate the upgrading of culverts to protect communities against flooding, while following the latest design standards.

Preparedness Initiatives

To complement these investments, the Mass Ready Act will help communities prepare for, withstand, and recover from severe weather and flooding.

- **Equipping the Building Code Board (BBRS) to Advance Resilience and Housing Priorities** by establishing new board seats for climate risk, resilient design and housing experts and adding resilience as a core objective of the building code. This provision does not immediately change the building code itself, but gives the BBRS the necessary capacity and expertise to consider and implement such changes. A 2024 study by the Executive Office of Economic Development and Department of Conservation and Recreation found increasing flood resilience through the building code could avoid \$10 - \$19 billion in losses in Massachusetts over the next 25 years.