

dcr  MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF  
CONSERVATION AND RECREATION  
Stewardship Council

Stewardship Council

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The Honorable Aaron Michlewitz  
Chairman, House Committee on Ways and Means  
Massachusetts State House  
24 Beacon St, Room 243  
Boston, MA, 02133

Dear Chairman Michlewitz,

The members of the Department of Recreation (DCR) Stewardship Council ask that the House budget recommendation for line item 2810-0100, funding for the operations of state parks and recreation, be raised to the Governor's recommended amount of \$107,632,351. The \$5,459,569 difference between what the Governor has proposed and what the house is proposing is a significant difference that would have negative impacts on the DCR's ability to operate its properties at the high level that is expected of them.

As you know, many people found respite in DCR's state parks and forests during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. They offered safe, outdoor spaces that people could escape to and see others during a time of great uncertainty. Many discovered the parks for the first time or rediscovered them after a long absence. As a result, the popularity of our state park system is now at an all-time high.

However, funding for our parks is not at an all-time high. In fact, Massachusetts is last in per capita spending in the country when it comes to support of state parks. Last year, DCR received an increase of \$10 million to this line which is a good start. An additional \$22 million as the Governor is proposing would continue to build the momentum needed for DCR to address the issues it is currently facing and to provide the world class park system that the people of the Commonwealth deserve.

Thank you for your time and for all the hard work that you put into the creation of the House budget. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions. I can be reached by phone at (508) 259-7195.

Sincerely,  
Jack Buckley  
Chair, DCR Stewardship Council

**CC:** Vice Chair Ann Margaret Ferrante  
Assistant Vice Chair Patricia A. Haddad  
Ranking Member Todd M. Smola

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