

dcr  MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
CONSERVATION AND RECREATION
Stewardship Council

Stewardship Council

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The Honorable Michael J. Rodrigues
Chairman, Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Massachusetts State House
24 Beacon St, Room 212
Boston, MA, 02133

Dear Chairman Rodrigues,

The members of the Department of Recreation (DCR) Stewardship Council ask that the Senate supports amendment 76 filed by Senator Mike Rush that increases funding for line item 2810-0100, DCR Parks and Recreation Operations, to \$107,632,351. The \$2,750,000 increase would have positive impacts on the DCR's ability to operate its properties at the high level that is expected of them and would match the funding recommended by Governor Healey in H.1.

As you know, 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 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 Cindy F. Friedman
Assistant Vice Chair Joanne M. Comerford
Ranking Member Patrick M. O'Connor

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