



June 1, 2017

Patricia Bowie, Coastal Resiliency Specialist  
Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management  
251 Causeway Street, Suite 800  
Boston, MA 02114

RE: Coastal Resilience Grant Program FY18 Application – Town of Weymouth’s Puritan Road Flood Mitigation and Ecological Resilience Project

Dear Ms. Bowie,

I am writing today to officially offer the support of The Back River Watershed Association, for the Town of Weymouth's Coastal Resilience Grant Program FY18 application for the Puritan Road Flood Mitigation and Ecological Resilience project, Great Esker Park Weymouth, MA.

As a coastal community, Weymouth places great value on its shorefront resources. The protected park land on which the project is located includes one of the country’s most dramatic examples of a glacial esker, a natural formation deposited 12,000 years ago by the last glacier’s retreat from New England. The Back River, one of two coastal rivers forming the town’s northern boundaries, has been designated by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as a Scenic River and an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), Wildlife Sanctuary, and Archeological Site. The ecological health of these coastal resources, including a highly productive estuary, salt marshes and tidal flats, is essential to finfish (including one of the state’s most important river herring runs), shellfish, birds, and other wildlife. The Back River Watershed is part of the Boston Harbor Basin, and includes coastline, marine, freshwater, estuary, wetland, river, pond and lake habitat of approximately 950 areas largely in the towns of Weymouth and Hingham, Massachusetts and serves a population of approximately 75,000 residents.

These areas were preserved under the leadership of Mary F. Toomey, Weymouth educator, Weymouth Town Meeting Member, author and recipient of the prestigious Visionary Award from the Gulf of Maine Council in 2004. She founded the Back River Watershed Association in 2000. Miss Toomey and her association worked for over four decades saving the Back River Estuary to identify and clean up pollution, restore the Weymouth Herring Run, and obtain all available lots abutting the Back River. There are now nine open space public parks for passive recreation. She also founded the Great Esker Park Natural Science Center. The Back River Watershed Association in cooperation with both local and state government also successfully identified and remediated a Tier 1A hazardous waste site at Weymouth Neck. Mary’s work and vision is ongoing today.

The Back River Watershed Association continues to collaborate with government agencies to fully restore the marine fisheries, open the shellfish beds, increase river herring, and improve water quality and quantity. The Back River has been referred to as one of the most important resources estuaries in the region. One of the primary concerns is climate change and rising sea levels, causing certain coastlines to reduce or disappear entirely. Increases in sea levels ranging from 4 to 33 inches with erosion, flooding, and tidal changes along with greater frequency of strong storms can damage coastline and ecosystems. In addition, the Back River Watershed Association encourages the public at large to act as good stewards protecting, preserving, and promoting the Back River from threat of development and degraded conditions that would cause harm to the community at large. These grant funds will allow the town to design and permit a proactive solution to a degraded resource area, which is an important step towards removing tidal restrictions on the site, restoring the functions and values of the resource area, and avoiding ecological impacts from flooding in future storms.

The Back River Watershed Association is a 501(c) (3) tax exempt organization organized to preserve, protect, and promote the Back River and its watershed in Weymouth, Hingham, and parts of Abington, Rockland & Braintree.

Visit us on Facebook @ <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Back-River-Watershed-Association>

In closing, I want to reiterate the Back River Watershed Association support for the Town of Weymouth's Coastal Resilience Grant Program FY18 application for the Puritan Road Flood Mitigation and Ecological Resilience project at Great Esker Park, Weymouth, MA. We believe town leadership, supporting partners, and the people of Weymouth will do great work with these funds dedicated to preserving, restoring and protecting our coastal areas. Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this important topic.

Sincerely,

Linda J. DiAngelo

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda J. DiAngelo". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'L' and 'D'.

President,  
Back River Watershed Association, Inc.