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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Afnan Nehela, Communications Director
Office of State Senator Jamie Eldridge
617-722-1120 (o); 617-833-7284 (c); Afnan.nehela@masenate.gov

Westborough Legislative Delegation Highlight Climate Resiliency Grant

Funding allows municipalities to invest in long-awaited ecosystem restoration and infrastructure projects to make communities more resilient in the era of climate change.

Westborough, MA – The Baker-Polito Administration announced \$4 million dollars in grants to drive climate change resilience and ecological restoration projects across the Commonwealth via the Department of Fish and Game’s Division of Ecological Restoration Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Grants Program and the Priority Ecological Restoration Projects. **The town of Westborough was awarded \$57,5000 to fund culvert upgrades along Jackstraw Brook.**

“I want to thank the Governor for investing in climate resiliency. Upgrading culverts along the Jackstraw Brook will not only improve ecological connectivity for fish and wildlife, resulting in a healthier ecosystem, but it will also provide flood protection benefits to the residents of Westborough,” **said Senator Jamie Eldridge (D-Acton)**. “Projects like this one that increase climate resilience are essential to the wellbeing of our environment and our communities. As more and more of our communities feel the impacts of the climate crisis, it is critical for the state government to invest more in climate resiliency, which should be a key part of the implementation of the Next Generation Roadmap law.”

“I am thrilled that Westborough has been awarded this grant funding for the benefit of our natural resources as well as for the protection of residents. Climate resiliency is a critical priority and I thank the Baker-Polito Administration for recognizing and investing in it,” **said State Representative Hannah Kane (R-Shrewsbury)**.

“I am grateful that the Administration saw fit to award Westborough with this necessary funding,” **said Representative Gregoire (D-Marlborough)**. “This critical investment will go a long way towards safeguarding our wildlife and natural resources, as well as protecting our residents from damaging floods.”

“Maintaining our water system from the ground up offers countless benefits to our ecosystem, our public health, and our emergency preparedness,” **said Representative Carolyn Dykema (D-Holliston)**. “As we continue to see increasingly severe impacts of climate change in our communities, programs like these offer critical support for cities and towns as they work to protect our shared natural resources.”

Culverts create bottlenecks unless they are right-sized. In Massachusetts, 50% of culverts are either too small, poorly positioned, or both. These small and antiquated culverts block passage of fish and wildlife and cause frequent road closures from overtopped roads with floodwaters from intensified storms brought on by climate change. Small culverts pose a threat to wildlife and public safety, and as rainfall intensifies with climate change, these types of nuisances will occur more frequently. Addressing culvert replacement to meet the Massachusetts Stream Crossing Standards allows rivers to flow unrestricted with lower risk of flood damage, delivering results for communities and wildlife alike by increasing overall ecosystem resilience.

The Jackstraw Brook is identified as a Coldwater Fish Resource, Outstanding Resource Water, and one of the major streams that flow to the Cedar Swamp Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). Funding for the culvert upgrade project is coming via the Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Grant Program. By restoring critical waterways like the Jackstraw Brook, the state is also securing safe and enjoyable access to natural spaces at a time where residents need it the most.

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