

PRESS RELEASE

Healey-Driscoll Administration Awards Grants to Improve Water Quality in the Buzzards Bay Watershed

Over \$800,000 in federal funds awarded to three municipalities

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Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM)

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BOSTON — The Healey-Driscoll Administration today announced \$808,500 in federally funded grant awards for projects that will improve water quality in the Buzzards Bay watershed. These three grants will fund wastewater treatment plant upgrades that will reduce tens of thousands of pounds of nitrogen pollution to Buzzards Bay, a nature-based stormwater and geese management project at an urban park, and a stormwater management plan and treatment designs to address discharges to a freshwater pond with a public beach. Grants are awarded by the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program (NEP) through the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM), with funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) pursuant to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021. The grants also leverage \$484,000 in local cash and in-kind services.

"The Healey-Driscoll Administration is focused on providing direct support to communities to improve local economies and the quality of life for the people that live there," **said Energy & Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper**. "These three projects improve public health and safeguard the environment and ensure our residents can enjoy the coastal waters of Buzzards Bay."

"These critical investments will help us preserve the beautiful Buzzards Bay for generations to come," **said CZM Director Lisa Berry Engler**. "Through these grants, the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program focuses funding resources on pragmatic projects that improve local water quality. We applaud the partnerships created and the on-the-ground results achieved."

The following municipalities were awarded grants:

- The **Town of Bourne** will receive \$183,500 to hire an engineering firm to address nutrient and bacteria loading to Queen Sewell Pond. The grant will fund stormwater treatment designs for a discharge near a freshwater bathing beach and develop an action plan for nine other stormwater discharges in the watershed. The pond has been impaired by harmful algal blooms and elevated bacteria levels, which have caused beach closures.
- The **Town of Dartmouth** will receive \$250,000 to make modifications to its wastewater treatment facility to better meet permitted discharge limits for certain pollutants and significantly reduce nitrogen discharges to Buzzards Bay. While the Town is not required to remove nitrogen from its discharge, adding aeration to certain tanks during this upgrade will cut nitrogen discharges in half, potentially removing more than 90,000 pounds of nitrogen pollution from the facility's discharge to Buzzards Bay each year. The nitrogen removal upgrade costs are \$475,000, and the Town will contribute the needed additional funds from their capital account.
- The **City of New Bedford** will receive \$375,000 to complete Phase II of the Buttonwood Park stormwater management project at the Buttonwood Senior Center. The project will address sediment erosion and pollutant discharges from the property and nearby neighborhoods. The site also has a large waterfowl population problem, notably Canada geese, whose wastes contribute to bacteria and nutrient pollution of the pond. The stormwater treatment system will consist of a biofilter raingarden, and the City will use habitat alteration techniques and barriers to exclude the waterfowl from the property. The Parks Department is working with the Conservation Commission to restore a vegetated buffer along the pond. The Senior Center also houses an adult with disabilities day care program, and Buttonwood Park abuts Environmental Justice populations and serves a diverse community in New Bedford and Dartmouth. New Bedford is providing \$237,000 toward the cost of the project through other sources.

"In my district of Southeastern Massachusetts, wastewater and stormwater runoff are major issues impacting not only the lives of those who live here but our tourism-based economy as well," **said Congressman Bill Keating**. "The funding for these projects will go a long way toward improving our water quality overall. I applaud the Healey-Driscoll Administration for directing these federal funds to address the needs of the Cape and South Coast."

"Reducing nutrient and pathogen pollution from public infrastructure is a top priority for our program," **said Buzzards Bay NEP Director, Dr. Joe Costa**. "These grants will address local needs and make meaningful progress to improve water quality."

“Protecting the Buzzards Bay watershed is essential toward safeguarding public health, combatting climate change, supporting the essential commercial fishing industry, and preserving our excellent quality of life alongside one of the most beautiful waterfronts in the country,” **said State Senator Mark Montigny (D-New Bedford)**. “Pollutant discharges, including nitrogen, have been an immense challenge for South Coast communities and these funds will provide significant assistance toward addressing the problem while minimizing the burden on local taxpayers.”

“This financial assistance is huge for these communities. The Healey-Driscoll administration has rapidly responded to the needs of our area,” **said State Representative Christopher Markey (D-Dartmouth)**. “They have listened to the boots on the ground and responded with funding for much needed wastewater infrastructure assistance.”

The Office of Coastal Zone Management is the lead policy and planning agency on coastal and ocean issues within the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. Created in 1985, the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program provides grants and technical assistance to Buzzards Bay watershed communities to protect and restore water quality and natural resources in Buzzards Bay and its surrounding watershed and is one of 28 similar programs designated by the EPA.

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Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (</orgs/executive-office-of-energy-and-environmental-affairs>)

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Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) (</orgs/massachusetts-office-of-coastal-zone-management-czm>)

CZM is the lead policy, planning, and technical assistance agency on coastal and ocean issues within the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) and implements the state's coastal program under the federal Coastal Zone Management Act.

PLEASE NOTE: The CZM Boston office has moved to 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900. See "Contact CZM" below for details.

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