

**SENATE . . . . . No. 2542**

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*June 24, 2025*

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives,

I am pleased to submit for your consideration Mass Ready, An Act to Build Resilience for Massachusetts Communities. The legislation authorizes future capital spending for the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA). Through the \$2.9 billion in authorizations, the legislation will strengthen our infrastructure, protect our water and nature, and invest in our farms and local economies.

**Strengthen Our Infrastructure**

The Act offers a proactive, cost-effective, and forward-thinking strategy to prepare Massachusetts for the increasing threats of climate change and extreme weather. It pairs smart policy with targeted investments that will strengthen our infrastructure, safeguard communities, and support equitable access to public resources. By investing now in climate-ready infrastructure and modernizing key systems, Massachusetts can reduce future disaster recovery costs, protect public safety, and promote long-term economic and environmental stability. This legislation reflects a whole-of-government approach that aligns state resilience investments with urgent housing and infrastructure needs.

The Act authorizes investments to repair and upgrade parks, roads, trails, and public lands; modernize Department of Fish and Game (DFG) infrastructure; and support the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in managing pollution and solid waste. These investments will have a direct and lasting impact on public safety, environmental health, and community wellbeing—particularly in historically underserved areas.

A cornerstone of the legislation is over \$600 million in flood control and coastal resilience funding. It addresses the growing frequency and cost of flooding across the state. Funding will be used to upgrade dams, seawalls, and nature-based defenses. Critically, the Act adds consumer protections by requiring flood risk disclosures during real estate transactions—a commonsense policy already adopted in many other states.

The Act strengthens state capacity to plan for the future by updating the composition and charge of the Building Code Board of Appeals and BBRS by adding seats for experts in climate risk, housing, and resilient design.

In meeting the challenge of climate impacts, we need to harness the power of nature to protect against climate impacts that are only becoming more extreme. That’s why we’re investing in nature based solutions like restoring salt marshes and rivers to protect against flooding and erosion and support important habitats.

Mass Ready proposes significant reforms to permitting for housing and nature-based solutions to speed up the process of approval and administrative appeals. State procedures should make it easier to build projects that address the impacts of climate change and the housing crisis in our communities.

#### Invest in Our Farms and Local Economies

Mass Ready invests in food security, land and water conservation, and climate-ready infrastructure. These investments includes \$315 million for the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program, \$125 million for the Food Security Infrastructure Grant (FSIG) program, \$220.5 million for conservation and open space, and the creation of a new Resilience Revolving Fund to finance local, shovel-ready resilience projects with a sustainable loan-based model.

The Act includes expanding the Food Policy Council to represent marine and academic expertise, and updating farm policy to improve animal health enforcement and food safety standards—ensuring the state remains responsive to both industry needs and public health.

In addition, the Act supports local land-use planning through capitalization of the Transfer of Development Rights Fund, and it enables road transfers from the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to the Department of Transportation and municipalities for more efficient infrastructure governance. These reforms signal a commitment to effective, modernized public administration while empowering local governments.

The state’s environmental protection system will also be reinforced with \$42 million for Superfund sites and \$28 million for solid waste management, which includes addressing hazardous threats and improving responses to illegal waste disposal concerns in communities. The Act also establishes the Commonwealth Port Sustainability Commission to develop a

statewide vision for Massachusetts' designated port areas—balancing economic development with coastal resilience.

### Protect Our Water and Nature

The Act takes a proactive and science-based approach to resource management. It invests \$385 million for the Clean Water Trust to invest in clean water infrastructure—prioritizing PFAS remediation, public health, and utility upgrades—while supporting municipalities and homeowners through financing tools like the Water Pollution Abatement and Drinking Water Revolving Funds. Additionally, \$120 million is authorized for the Department of Environmental Protection to manage PFAS contamination.

The Act also makes landmark commitments to land conservation and biodiversity. It authorizes \$220.5 million for restoration and stewardship of forests, wetlands, and wildlife habitats, and dedicates \$20 million to implement Executive Order 618, establishing Biodiversity goals. Forest resilience is further strengthened through updates to the Current Use tax program to recognize carbon sequestration and provide long-term protection for forested and working lands.

Public access, environmental education, and historic resource protection are also core elements of the legislation. Mass Ready expands DCR's ability to partner with private entities to rehabilitate historic assets and manage parkland more effectively. It improves safety and navigation on the Connecticut River, and it ensures that more residents can connect with nature and understand the role healthy ecosystems play in public well-being. The Act also directs \$9 million to modernize environmental law enforcement.

The Act streamlines the permitting of qualifying nature-based resilience projects that protect public safety and restore critical ecosystems. It introduces expedited pathways for marsh restoration, dam removal, wetland enhancement, and other ecological projects under Chapter 91 and the Wetlands Protection Act.

This legislation is critical to ensure that Massachusetts is a safe, healthy, and affordable place for all our residents to live. I look forward to working with you to advance this critical investment in our shared future.

Respectfully submitted,

Maura T. Healey,  
*Governor*