



Waltham Land Trust, Inc.
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A non-profit organization dedicated to preserving our community's natural resources through open space advocacy, education, acquisition, and protection.

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**Protecting
Waltham's land
...forever.**

March 23, 2023

Dear Secretary Tepper and Commissioner Rice,

Thank you for the opportunity to write to you about DCR's Watertown Dam. We are writing to you from the Waltham Land Trust. Our mission is to create a legacy of land conservation in Waltham by promoting, protecting, restoring, and acquiring open space.

The Waltham Land Trust encourages you to support the removal of the Watertown Dam and restoration of the Charles River. We were impressed by the 2021 feasibility study's findings and are excited about the prospects of further restoring Alewife, American Eel, Blueback Herring and Rainbow Smelt to the Charles River which flows through Waltham.

In our community, we are already seeing the impacts of stronger storms and increased rainfall from climate change. Aging infrastructure like Watertown Dam poses a risk as we are seeing stronger and more intense storms, which much infrastructure was not designed for.

Findings of the report include information that flood elevations upstream of the dam will be lowered 6 ft upstream of the dam and no change in flooding is anticipated downstream.

The Watertown Dam being in place harms the health of the Charles River. Removal of the Dam and restoration of the river will help further progress years of cleanup of the Charles River.

The current impounded area of the river upstream of the dam has higher temperatures and lower dissolved oxygen levels. Freeing the Charles River in Watertown will lead to lower temperatures and higher dissolved oxygen levels as the water would flow more freely. Colder waterways with higher levels of dissolved oxygen are better for fish like the wild trout that our organization supports.

Not only migratory fish would benefit from removal of the Watertown Dam, other resident fish including bass, bullhead, catfish, perch, and pickerel would also have increased habitat and access to food and mates.

At a time of reckoning in the Commonwealth and our country we have learned that the construction of the Watertown Dam and others were opposed by the local indigenous peoples. Today we write to start to mend these wrongs and join with those indigenous voices who have been calling for years to remove the Watertown Dam and restore the river.

Sincerely,

Sonja Wadman
Executive Director

CC:

Massachusetts Fish & Game Commissioner Ron Amidon
Division of Marine Fisheries Commissioner Daniel McKiernan
City of Watertown Council
City of Watertown Conservation Commission
CRWA Executive Director Emily Norton