

TOWN OF WELLESLEY



MASSACHUSETTS

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

TOWN HALL • 888 WORCESTER STREET • WELLESLEY, MA 02482

TELEPHONE: (781) 431-1019 X2298

WWW.WELLESLEYMA.GOV/NRC

Dear Secretary Card and Commissioner Rice,

Thank you for the opportunity to write to you about DCR's Watertown Dam. We are writing to you from Wellesley. Our mission/charge is to provide stewardship of, education about, and advocacy for the Town of Wellesley's parks, conservation, recreation and open space areas so the full value of the Town's natural assets can be passed onto future generations.

We encourage you to join Watertown leadership in support of the removal of the Watertown Dam and restoration of the Charles River. We partner with Watertown in the Charles River Watershed's Climate compact and 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. Findings of the feasibility also report that flood elevations upstream of the dam will be lowered 6ft and no change in flooding is anticipated downstream.

Through findings in Wellesley's recent Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness and Climate Action planning initiatives, we are concerned about the impacts of stronger storms and increased rainfall from climate change. Aging infrastructure like the Watertown Dam pose a regional risk as we are seeing stronger and more intense storms.

The current dam harms the health of the Charles River, as the current impoundment area upstream of the dam has higher temperatures and lower dissolved oxygen levels. Freeing the Charles River in Watertown will restore temperature and oxygen levels, benefiting native fish populations and overall river health.

We ask you to support our partners in Watertown to help improve our Watershed.

On behalf of the Commission, thank you for your consideration,

Brandon Schmitt, Director
Wellesley Natural Resources Commission