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Charles River Watershed Association's statement on 2050 Roadmap Bill

WESTON, MA [March 26, 2021] — Great news for Massachusetts and the Charles River watershed! Today, Governor Baker signed into law critical legislation that will put Massachusetts on a path towards addressing climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The Massachusetts legislature last passed a bold climate bill in 2008. The legislation enacted today will help speed our transition to a net-zero emission economy by 2050, something we know is imperative in order to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

Importantly, this bill includes provisions to further environmental justice, ensuring low-income, immigrant, and communities of color have a voice in projects that impact their neighborhoods—it is long past time we rectify the legacy of environmental harm that has been inflicted. It also recognizes the important role nature plays in carbon sequestration and emissions reduction and will result in increased protection of trees, wetlands, and other natural features.

We are grateful to the state legislature, especially President Spilka and Speaker Mariano, for prioritizing climate legislation this session and sending this bill quickly back to Governor Baker for his signature.

However, the work is not yet done. While this legislation will play a major role in reducing emissions and mitigating future impacts, climate change is already here. Flooding, extreme heat, and drought are already occurring and getting worse, with our most vulnerable communities being hardest-hit. Here at CRWA, we are working with our watershed communities and partners to implement on-the-ground solutions to the challenges brought by climate change, but we need more help from the state. We need stronger measures in place to build climate resilience and adapt to climate impacts, including more funding for programs that support these efforts. As we join our legislative leaders in celebrating this major victory today, we call upon them to continue the work this session to build a climate-resilient Massachusetts for all.

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Charles River Watershed Association uses science, advocacy, urban design and education to promote resilient communities and a healthy river ecosystem. CRWA was formed in 1965 in response to public concern about the declining condition of the Charles River. Since its earliest days of advocacy, CRWA has figured prominently in major clean-up and watershed protection efforts that have dramatically improved the health of the Charles.