

April 29, 2019

The Honorable Deb Szaro
Acting Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
Region I
5 Post Office Square
Boston, MA 02109-3912

Dear Administrator Szaro:

We are writing to respectfully request that you join us for a tour of the Merrimack River and hear from local stakeholders about the urgent need for coordinated efforts to protect this critical regional resource.

As you know, the Merrimack River continues to receive harmful discharges from point and non-point sources. In particular, combined sewer systems contaminate the river through the introduction of raw sewage and untreated stormwater. Indeed, 800 million gallons of effluent entered the river last year. This is a region-wide challenge that requires support and coordination from all levels of government as well as active engagement from nonprofit stakeholders and ratepayers in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. We are eager to work together and with the EPA to protect the Merrimack.

The 1972 Federal Water Pollution Control Act ("Clean Water Act") established a wastewater treatment grant program, commonly known as the "construction grant" or "Section 221" program. These grants provided cost-shared support for wastewater treatment improvements. However, over time, the program was phased out and replaced by the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF), a long-term loan program. While the CWSRF has been an important component of wastewater infrastructure improvements over the past 30 years, municipalities require grants as well as technical assistance to meet Clean Water Act requirements. Indeed, according to the latest EPA Clean Water Needs Survey, approximately \$48 billion is needed nationwide for CSO abatement. In Massachusetts alone, \$977 million is required.

As we seek funding through the federal budget process for the renewed Section 221 grant program – re-established under the America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 – we want to work with you to ensure that all of EPA's current resources are available to prevent point source and non-point source pollution entering the Merrimack River. To that end, we respectfully ask that you meet with us at a mutually agreeable time and location in a watershed community to discuss these issues and see the river's condition for yourself.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Lois

Eileen Day

John

John

Richard

Christina Eckert

Brad Tjost

Kamya Conors

Cheri Cousins

Matthew Anderson

Will

Marcos Dejeers

MARCOS DEJEERS
LAWRENCE MA STATE REP

Paul B. Chen

Mark

John

John

James P. Sajoza

Will

~~Signature~~
Milt Samaras

Jim Calow
In Campbell
State Representative
Ricky Shuman
CLEAN RIVER PROJECT

AD OARS

~~Signature~~
BRIAN PEÑA
CITY OF LAWRENCE

~~Signature~~
Carlos Teague
City of Lawrence

~~Signature~~
JAMES A. DUGGAN
TOWN OF BRANT

~~Signature~~
Howell Motor Boat Club