



October 11, 2021

Charles River Dam Advisory Committee
c/o James Errickson, Town Administrator
Natick Town Hall, 2nd Floor
13 East Central Street
Natick, MA

Via Email: jerrickson@natickma.org
mosthues@cbi.org

Re: Letter Regarding the Future of the Charles River Dam in South Natick

Dear Committee Members:

Mass Audubon is pleased to provide this letter as part of Natick's public outreach program with residents and stakeholders regarding the future of the Charles River Dam in South Natick.

Mass Audubon is supportive of nature-based solutions, including the removal of obsolete dams to restore natural riverine flows, structural features, and processes; reduce flood hazards; improve water quality and habitat for fish and other aquatic life; and to restore floodplains and riparian corridors. Mass Audubon has supported many other dam removal and riparian restoration projects. Examples on Mass Audubon's properties include the restoration of former cranberry bogs at Tidmarsh Wildlife Sanctuary in Plymouth – the largest freshwater restoration project in the Northeast, and removal of a dam on Sackett Brook in Pittsfield, MA in 2014. Our experiences with these projects have highlighted the importance of effective public outreach in addition to the technical planning and permitting that is needed to achieve success. Through our statewide network of wildlife sanctuaries and nature centers we are engaged in many educational programs and stakeholder engagement processes related to nature-based solutions.

As the largest riverfront property owner upstream of the Charles River Dam in South Natick – including land that is part of the Natural Valley Storage Area, Mass Audubon has a strong interest in the restoration opportunity offered by this project. Mass Audubon has participated in several public meetings regarding the future of the dam and has been impressed with the thoroughness of the process. Given our statewide experiences, we are eager to see dam removal explored with further detailed planning, and are hopeful this will lead to the River being returned to its natural flow with habitats for native species.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elissa M. Landre".

Elissa M. Landre
Community Advocacy and Engagement Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heidi Ricci".

Heidi Ricci
Director of Policy and Advocacy

cc: Jillian Wilson-Martin, Natick Director of Sustainability