



Mr. Robert G. Hunt
Senior Project Manager, Retired
US Army Corps of Engineers

Governor Maura Healey
Massachusetts State House
24 Beacon Street
Office of the Governor, Room 280
Boston, MA 02133

June 2, 2025

Dear Governor Healey,

COASTAL FLOOD PROTECTION FOR:

REVERE, LYNN, SAUGUS, MALDEN, EVERETT AND NAHANT, MASSACHUSETTS

On behalf of the nearly **one million residents, employees and commuters** who faced the recent and continuing threat of coastal flooding and sea level rise in these six communities, I encourage you to actively support the communities' request, approved by President Biden, to accelerate the review of the completed planning and design of the **Regional Saugus River Floodgate Project** to get it constructed. According to Senator Elizabeth Warren, the Federal delegation has been waiting for the Commonwealth's "...cost sharing Memorandum of Agreement..." before Federal funds can be appropriated to conduct the **Boston North Shore restudy**. Your new tax revenue of \$3 billion from the Millionaire's Tax could easily fund the \$1.5 million (\$500k initially) restudy to complete it. Boston is under the same threat with a study underway, but these North Shore folks spent years helping to plan and design their project.

EMERGENCY GUIDANCE

The Boston North Shore six-community region experienced catastrophic flooding in the Blizzard of 1978, when 3,100 buildings flooded, homes burned, and roads made impassable.... followed by subsequent floods. The region now faces far worse danger with accelerated sea level rise. Despite a major effort to plan and design a Regional Project to protect the region, it was placed on hold. The threat is very real and this letter is intended to give the state and region guidance to complete the planning, design and construction of a regional project by the Corps of Engineers in 5 years rather than 10-15 years.

Background: Five regional steering committees helped the Army Corps of Engineers with a \$20 million ('93 price level) effort over 8 years to plan and design the **Regional Saugus River Floodgate Project**. This Project, estimated now at a cost of about \$300 million to build, would protect the region against accelerated sea level rise and the worst coastal storm likely to occur,



the Standard Project Northeaster (SPN). The project also includes the purchase and protection of the 1,650-acres of saltwater estuary, and the removal of the abandoned I-95 embankment which would restore flushing to 500 acres of wetlands. As the Project neared construction following a hundred public and committee meetings, it was placed on hold, despite the positive Environmental Certificate, the Commonwealth's sponsorship, and findings which proved its strong public acceptance, economic feasibility, and environmental benefits. Studies show that the Project increases its cost-effectiveness as sea level rises. No funding has been forthcoming to resume the currently required Federal **Boston North Shore restudy** for this project.

Imminent Risk: Another disaster is likely, before action may be taken, endangering upwards of 8,000 buildings, a million residents, employees and commuters. When a disaster and repeated flooding does occur, the region will be desperate for protection. The traditional 10-15 years for a restudy, design and construction will be unacceptable. Coastal storms are forecasted to become more intense in the 2030s. The MA Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Office projects a 2.5-foot sea level rise by 2050, which would result in 10-foot flood depths and \$2 billion in damages from the SPN. By 2100, with 7.8 feet of sea level rise, expected flood depths could reach 15 feet above the start of damages, causing \$4 billion in damages. Less intense storms would cause hundreds of millions in damages.

Recommendations: If there is hope of getting a project built quickly, a dedicated oversight committee is needed to accelerate implementation. The first challenge, besides getting funded, is to review the extensive investigations documented in the project's web site (saugusriverfloodgates.com) and realize that a restudy would result in the same recommended plan. A Federal complete restudy could waste \$3 million and 3 years in time, lives and property. Under emergency conditions, it may be possible to avoid extensive restudy. Also important is to encourage the Administration to proceed under Emergency "Design/Build" procedures, potentially completing and operating the Project in about 5 years instead of the standard 10-15 years. For a summary and map of the project, a Brochure is included on the web site.

I had the honor to help plan, design and construct 75 miles of shorefront protection for 56 communities in less than two years under Operation Foresight for the Great Lakes in the 1970s. With the incentive and direction, there's nothing the Corps of Engineers cannot accomplish. This letter was coordinated with: Mr. Steven C. Davis, former MA Assistant Secretary of Environmental Affairs, during the study; Dr. Joseph Horowitz, the study's Environmental Manager; and Ms. Elle Baker, Revere Project Planner and Coordinator.



If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Ms. Elle Baker, Revere Project Planner/Coordinator can be reached at 781-286-8188, or ebaker@revere.org. Mr. Steven C. Davis can be reached at 617-357-3714, or sdavis@verrill-law.com.

Very sincerely,

Robert G. Hunt

Copies furnished:

Colonel Justin Pabis, Commander, USACE New England, 696 Virginia Rd., Concord, MA 01742

Senator Elizabeth Warren, 2400 JFK Federal Bldg., 15 New Sudbury St., Boston, MA 02203

Senator Ed Markey, 976 JFK Federal Bldg., 15 New Sudbury St., Boston, MA 02203

Rep. Katherine Clark, 157 Pleasant St., Suite 4, Malden, MA 02148

Rep. Seth Moulton, 21 Front St., Salem, MA 01970

Sec. Rebecca Tepper, Energy & Environment, 100 Cambridge St., 10th Floor, Boston, MA 02114

Ms. Melissa Hoffer, Climate Chief, State House Room 280, Boston, MA 02133

Mayor Patrick M. Keefe, Jr, City of Revere, City Hall, 281 Broadway, Revere, MA 02151

Mayor Jared C. Nicholson, City of Lynn, 3 City Hall Square, Lynn, MA 01901

Mayor Gary Christenson, City of Malden, 215 Pleasant St., 4th Floor, Malden, MA 02148

Mayor Carlo DeMaria, City of Everett, 484 Broadway, Everett, MA 02149

Town Manager Scott C. Crabtree, Esq., 298 Central St., Suite 1, Saugus, MA 01906

Town Administrator Antonio Barletta, Nahant Town Hall, 334 Nahant Rd., Nahant, MA 01908

Ms. Elle Baker, Planning & Economic Development, City Hall, 281 Broadway, Revere, MA 02151

Mr. Peter Manoogian, Saugus Town Meeting Member, Saugus, MA 01906

Mr. Joseph Horowitz, Project Environmental Manager US Army Corps of Engineers, Retired

Mr. Steven C. Davis, Pres., Verrill Strategic Consul., One Federal Street, 20th Floor, Boston, MA 02110