

# WESTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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## MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** DOUG RICE, DCR COMMISSIONER; BETHANY CARD, SECRETARY OF THE EOEEA  
**FROM:** JORDAN MCCARRON, CONSERVATION ADMINISTRATOR  
**SUBJECT:** REMOVAL OF THE WATERTOWN DAM  
**DATE:** DECEMBER 16, 2022  
**CC:** Massachusetts Fish & Game Commissioner Ron Amidon  
Division of Marine Fisheries Commissioner Daniel McKiernan  
City of Watertown Council  
City of Watertown Conservation Commission  
CRWA Executive Director Emily Norton

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Dear Secretary Card and Commissioner Rice,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Weston Conservation Commission (WCC)- the WCC voted 5-0 at its meeting on December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022, to support the removal of the Watertown Dam (the Dam) and to authorize me to send this letter on its behalf.

We encourage you to support the removal of the Dam and the continued ecological restoration of the Charles River. In particular, we are eager to see enhanced habitat for Alewife, American Eel, Blueback Herring and Rainbow Smelt through the Charles River corridor.

The Charles River provides a valuable ecological and recreational resource as it flows through Weston and it is in the best interest of the WCC to see the capacity of the River to support these important fish species protected. The WCC was pleased to see little impact to the River's recreation potential in the 2021 DER Watertown Dam Removal Feasibility Study (Feasibility Study).

In Weston, we are concerned about the potential for increased and detrimental flooding and storm damage associated with climate change. Aging infrastructure like the Dam pose a real and serious safety risk, particularly for upstream communities, as we experience stronger and more intense storms for which these older dams were not designed. To be sure, The Feasibility Study made clear that the Dam is not designed to provide flood control as a run of river dam.

As we understand it, the current impounded area of the river upstream of the dam has higher recorded temperatures and lower dissolved oxygen levels than the adjacent downstream side. Freeing the Charles River in Watertown would lead to lower temperatures and higher dissolved oxygen levels throughout this corridor; colder waterways with higher levels of dissolved oxygen are better for fish like the wild trout. Other resident fish, including bass, bullhead, catfish, perch and pickerel would also benefit from a free-flowing river.

Finally, we have learned that the construction of dams like the Watertown Dam, up and down the Charles, have been opposed by local indigenous peoples for centuries due to the Dam's interference with native fishing practices and as a symbol of colonization. We join with those indigenous voices who have been calling for years to remove the Dam and restore the river.