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# Press Release

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## **Weymouth awarded \$1.6M grant for Fore River Avenue seawall repairs and coastal infrastructure improvements**

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Weymouth, MA – Mayor Robert Hedlund, Senator Patrick O'Connor, and Representative James Murphy announced today that the Town of Weymouth has received a \$1,685,887 grant through the state's Dam and Seawall Repair or Removal Fund and Governor Charlie Baker's annual capital budget to rebuild and improve the Town's seawall, rock revetment, and additional coastal infrastructure along Fore River Avenue. Weymouth's Administrative Services Coordinator Nicholas Bulens, representing Mayor Hedlund, joined Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Matthew Beaton and other state and local officials for the award announcement in Plymouth. Over \$11.5 million was awarded to 22 communities and groups across the Commonwealth to help finalize designs, reconstruct critical infrastructure, and remove obsolete or unneeded structures.

"I've seen firsthand the devastating impact of storms and flooding on those living in our coastal neighborhoods. These funds are critical to helping us rebuild our seawalls and protect residents from the extreme weather events we know are coming, like the most recent bomb cyclone," **said Mayor Robert Hedlund.** "I thank the Baker-Polito Administration for making this investment a priority, and enabling Weymouth to take a crucial step towards greater resilience and greater safety."

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' Dam and Seawall Program builds upon the Baker-Polito Administration's commitment to strengthen the resilience of communities throughout Massachusetts by coordinating assistance to cities and towns as

they prepare for the impacts of climate change. Since its inception, the Dam and Seawall Program has awarded over \$46 million in grant and loans to support projects in more than 40 communities. This fiscal year (FY18), awards were given for 10 dam repair projects, six dam removal projects, and six coastal protection reconstruction projects. These awards include both grants and loans.

"As the recent storm illustrates, the maintenance and improvement of our coastal infrastructure is one of the greatest challenges facing the South Shore," **said Senator Patrick O'Connor**. "I thank the Baker-Polito Administration for the grant awarded to Weymouth today, and their continued commitment to ensuring that the Commonwealth's coastal communities are prepared to deal with the effects of climate change."

"It is imperative to have a plan and infrastructure in place to maintain our commitment to coastal resiliency," **said Representative James Murphy**. "We continue to observe noteworthy weather patterns and the impact they are having on Massachusetts' coastlines. In working closely with the Baker-Polito Administration, we have had constructive conversations leading to vital commitments in addressing our coastal concerns here in Weymouth and along the South Shore."

Weymouth's all-grant award will support the construction phase of the Fore River Avenue Seawall Project. Existing infrastructure along Fore River Avenue includes 905 feet of seawall and abutting armor stone, or rock revetment. Drainage along the roadway is managed by a patchwork of catch basins and outflow pipes that discharges untreated stormwater directly onto the beach and into the Weymouth Fore River. The condition of these structures varies greatly from one end of Fore River Avenue to the other.

The seawall's eastern segment, running approximately 324 feet, has a top height of 14.5 feet above the average low tide, and has been rated in poor condition by the state's Coastal Infrastructure Inventory and Assessment Project due to advanced levels of deterioration, cracking, spalling, undermining, and section loss. The roadway's largest outflow pipe, measuring 24-inches in diameter, also has extensive breaking, crumpling, and section loss, which has led to beach erosion in the pipe's immediate vicinity. The seawall's western segment, in contrast, has a top height of 16.9 feet above the average low tide, and has been rated in fair condition due to previous reconstruction work in the late 1970s, which encapsulated the segment and increased its height by about 2.5 feet.

Fore River Avenue's seawall and associated infrastructure provide critical protection to 14 residential homes located in or around a FEMA-designated VE Flood Zone, or high-velocity wave action area. The Town's design team, led by Bourne Consulting Engineering of Franklin, ran wave and overtopping analyses based on the roadway's existing conditions and concluded that any storm with a 10-year return or greater will likely cause "unsafe conditions for vehicles, pedestrians, and buildings behind the structures, as well as cause damage to the seawall structure." Indeed, significant flooding on Fore River Avenue was experienced during the January-4th bomb cyclone just three weeks ago.

To enhance protection for residents and travelers along Fore River Avenue, the Town will relocate and reconstruct the eastern segment of the existing seawall, as well as expand

and stabilize the existing rock revetment along the entire length of the roadway. The new segment of seawall will be cast-in-place concrete with a top height of 17.0 feet the above average low tide – a two and a half foot increase over current conditions. The roadway behind the wall will be raised approximately 18 inches and its width reduced to 25 feet, allowing the eastern seawall and adjacent rock revetment to be extended inland. The western segment of the seawall will remain unchanged, with the adjacent rock revetment reset and extended slightly seaward using one- to two-ton armor stones.

The result of the project will be a uniform seawall height of 17 feet above the average low tide and a uniform revetment height of 16 feet running the full length of Fore River Avenue. In addition, despite expansion of the rock revetment, the project will preserve nearly all the existing coastal beach, as the existing limits of the rock revetment will not significantly change.

Drainage structures on Fore River Avenue will also be reconstructed. All existing catch basins and outflow pipes will be replaced, with some new basins added along the western end of the roadway. A stormwater separator, capable of removing 80 percent of total suspended solids from runoff, will be installed, as will check valves on all outflow pipes to prevent backflow due to high tides and storm surges.

Permitting for the Fore River Avenue Seawall Project is currently underway. The total construction cost was estimated at \$2,247,850. The Dam and Seawall Program Grant will cover 75 percent of this cost, with the Town responsible for a local match of \$561,963, or 25 percent. Funding for the project's design phase was previously provided through the EEA's Rivers and Harbors Grant Program.

The Dam and Seawall Repair or Removal Fund was established in 2013 by the state legislature to assist communities and groups across Massachusetts in addressing deteriorating dams and refurbishing critical coastal infrastructure. As a Senator, Mayor Hedlund played a lead role in the fund's creation.

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