



SENATOR CYNTHIA STONE CREEM
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First Middlesex and Norfolk District

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U.S. Department of Agriculture – Forest Service
Urban and Community Forestry Program
USDA Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry Inflation Reduction Act Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

May 31, 2023

To whom it may concern,

I am pleased to submit a letter of support for the application submitted by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) to the U.S. Forest Service. As the majority leader of the Massachusetts Senate and the chair of the Senate Committee on Global Warming and Climate Change, I am aware of the tremendous success of the Greening the Gateway Cities Program run by EEA, and I believe that funding provided by the Forest Service would allow the Commonwealth to build on that track record of success.

Throughout Massachusetts, residents are already seeing and feeling the impacts of climate change, especially in underserved environmental justice communities. Extreme urban heat, excessive air pollution, lack of open space, and large amounts of impervious surface are exacerbating the negative environmental and health impacts that continue to plague these communities.

Last summer, record heatwaves brought temperatures of over 100 degrees to Massachusetts. That kind of heat can be harmful to human health, and it is not felt equally. There was widespread news coverage of the large disparities in heat that exist between leafy neighborhoods and neighborhoods where trees are scarce. On one summer day in Boston, [The Boston Globe reported](#) that the difference in temperature between West Roxbury and parts of Chinatown and Lower Roxbury was 10 degrees. A [study conducted by The Nature Conservancy](#) found a seven-degree difference between two neighborhoods in Worcester.

The Massachusetts Legislature has recognized the need for nature-based solutions to combat the ongoing impacts of higher temperatures and more frequent and intense storms, which is why we passed legislation funding state tree planting initiatives. I have also filed [legislation to build on EEA's successful urban forestry programs by establishing a statewide Municipal Reforestation Program](#). Grant funding from the Forest Service would bolster the Commonwealth's existing tree-planting programs while also building a strong foundation for a statewide program like the one I've proposed.

A robust urban tree canopy provides dual climate benefits. It helps mitigate the climate crisis by sequestering carbon, and it also helps make vulnerable communities more resilient against the impacts of climate change. I support EEA's application for Urban and Community Forestry funding—which specifically focuses on Massachusetts' residents living in disadvantaged communities—because I know it will make us a more resilient and more environmentally just Commonwealth.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter and of EEA's proposal. Please do not hesitate to reach out to my office with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cynthia Stone Creem".

Cynthia Stone Creem
State Senator
First Middlesex and Norfolk