



RE: Housatonic River Natural Damages Funds

Support of Proposal No. 3 - Housatonic Environmental Literacy Program (HELP)
for the River, Massachusetts Audubon Society

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a sixth grade science teacher at Herberg Middle School in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Mass Audubon has been coming into my sixth grade science classes for many years to educate students about the history of the Housatonic River in Berkshire County. This program is a great addition to our physical and life science curriculum.

A large part of the sixth grade science curriculum is learning about the physical Earth and life sciences, past and present. The Proposal No. 3 program would give sixth grade students a better understanding of these sciences because they could make the connection to a local resource like the Housatonic River. The Housatonic River is located only a quarter mile from our school.

The present Housatonic River Program taught in my science class is limited in time and resources due to the present minimal funding. The new HELP proposal would greatly increase funding and in turn would add many hours of engaging student learning directly related to the curriculum. More important, the new proposed program would make students aware of the changes the Housatonic River has gone through in its past, what it looks like presently and decisions that will determine its future.

The Housatonic River has received a bad rap because of its history of pollution. The students realize this conception of the river is not totally accurate when we take the entire sixth grade, one class at a time, on a canoe trip down the Housatonic River. For many, it is the first time they are able to experience the outdoors away from roads, cars, iPods, and cell phones. The new proposal would bring the river into the classroom and bring more students to the Housatonic, our hometown river.

I would be very excited to have this program taught to my science students. I hope you see value in enriching the students, teachers and the local community by supporting the *Housatonic Environmental Literacy Program (HELP) for the River*.

Sincerely,

Robert Geller

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