



Leo Roy, Commissioner
Department of Conservation and Recreation
251 Causeway Street
Boston, MA 02114

December 3, 2018

Re: **Middlesex Fells 90mm Meadow**

Dear Commissioner Roy,

We are writing with concern regarding the potential siting of a hockey rink, parking, and other infrastructure in the Lawrence Woods portion of the Middlesex Fells, also known as the 90mm Meadow.

Our organizations are the oldest and largest conservation nonprofits in the Commonwealth. As you know, the Middlesex Fells is also one of the largest and oldest public parks in Massachusetts. The Fells plays an important role in the history of land conservation, beginning in the 1880's with F. L. Olmstead's protégé Charles Eliot, working in the offices of the Appalachian Mountain Club, to found the nation's first organization to hold scenic lands for public use and enjoyment. That organization was The Trustees of Public Reservations, or what is now known as The Trustees. The first donation of land to The Trustees was Virginia Wood, in what is now the Middlesex Fells. Eliot and his colleagues then went on to form the Metropolitan Parks Commission, the forerunner of the Department of Conservation and Recreation. In addition to the historic importance of the Middlesex Fells, it is an oasis of nature in a densely populated urban area.

Pressures on conservation land are many, and protected natural open space is a finite and precious public resource. The parks system that we have today in Massachusetts exists because of long-term public investments and protections, and because we collectively remember to take the long view. It is important to note that:

- The Middlesex Fells is a public resource protected under Article 97 of the amendments to the Massachusetts Constitution. The public interest in this precious urban conservation land extends to all residents of the Commonwealth.
- This land in question is designated as an area to be managed for conservation and passive recreation in the approved Resource Management Plan (RMP)¹, adopted in 2012 pursuant to MGL Ch. 21 S. 2F, following an extensive public participation process. Development of active recreational facilities or parking is not allowed, and this comprehensive plan for the Fells carefully identified which areas were appropriate for developed recreational and access uses, and which were not.

¹ <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/middlesex-fells-planning-unit>

- The proposed site for the hockey rink and parking is Zone 1 under the RMP, meadow habitat for butterflies and birds. It has been the focus of many local volunteer efforts to restore native species and record the biodiversity of the meadow, including efforts by the Girl Scouts.

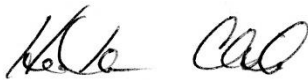
Given these reasons, including the public resources that have gone into the protection and management of this site and the extensive public vetting of the RMP's management direction, we are opposed to conversion of this meadow to a hockey rink and parking area.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



John J. Clarke
Director of Public Policy and Government Relations
Mass Audubon



Heather Clish
Director of Conservation & Recreation Policy
Appalachian Mountain Club



Nancy Goodman
Vice-President for Policy
Environmental League of Massachusetts



Jennifer Ryan
Director of Policy
The Trustees

Cc:

Senator Patricia Jehlen
Senator Jason Lewis
Representative Michael Day
Representative Paul Donato
Medford Mayor Stephanie Burke
Ronald Morin, Executive Director of the Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation