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Congressional Notification

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U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey
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Massachusetts Funding Cuts Will Lead to Loss of Critical Streamflow Information

The following information describes budget reductions for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for fiscal year 2010 that will eliminate funding for 18 U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) streamgages in Massachusetts. We are providing this background on the situation and points of contact for further information or clarification, as your constituents may express concern over the loss of the services.

In response to recent Massachusetts funding reductions, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) will be reducing their support for the USGS streamgaging program in many basins across Massachusetts. As a result, 18 of the 93 streamgages funded by DCR in Massachusetts will be discontinued. On July 1, 2009, data collection at 13 of the 18 streamgages will cease. The USGS will continue to collect data at five of the most critical of the 18 streamgages while alternative sources of funding are sought. However, these five streamgages will be discontinued in 2010 if no other funding sources are secured.

The USGS continues to work with federal, state, and local government agencies to seek alternative funding sources so operations of these streamgages can continue. At the present time, however, no alternative funding has been found for the Massachusetts streamgages. While the USGS received approximately $140 million under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), projects proposed for funding through the ARRA were required to meet a number of criteria. There is no provision under ARRA to provide funding for streamgages that can no longer be funded by partner agencies.

The loss of the 18 streamgages will leave a network of 97 streamgages for the state. Legislation authorizing the USGS National Cooperative Water Program (CWP), which supports these streamgages, requires that the USGS only spend its funds if they are matched by other sources. The reduction in State funding, therefore, requires a decrease in USGS funding of these streamgages. Some of the USGS CWP funds would be placed towards the operation of other streamgages in the State and some would be used for other hydrologic programs.

Five of the 18 streamgages are used by the National Weather Service. Additionally, 17 streamgages are considered to be hydrologically significant because the data from these stations can be used to estimate flows at other locations. This is important for the streamflow regulations that the State water resource agencies promulgate, as well as for estimating floods and droughts. The one other streamgage of the 18 is a stage-only

site on the Mystic River at the Amelia Earhart Dam, and provides critical real-time river and tide stage data for operation of the Dam.

All 18 streamgages funded by DCR currently provide information on a real-time basis on the Internet at**:** http://waterdata.usgs.gov/ma/nwis/rt/**.** These data are used by citizens and communities to make decisions about water supplies, flood hazards and recreation.

The USGS and over 850 other federal, state, and local agencies cooperatively fund the national USGS streamgage network. This partnership has worked well over many years, combining federal and non-federal resources to address many of the Nation's most pressing water resource issues, resulting in great cost savings to both the federal government and the states. However, budget fluctuations and shifting priorities in partnering agencies can significantly impact the streamgage network.

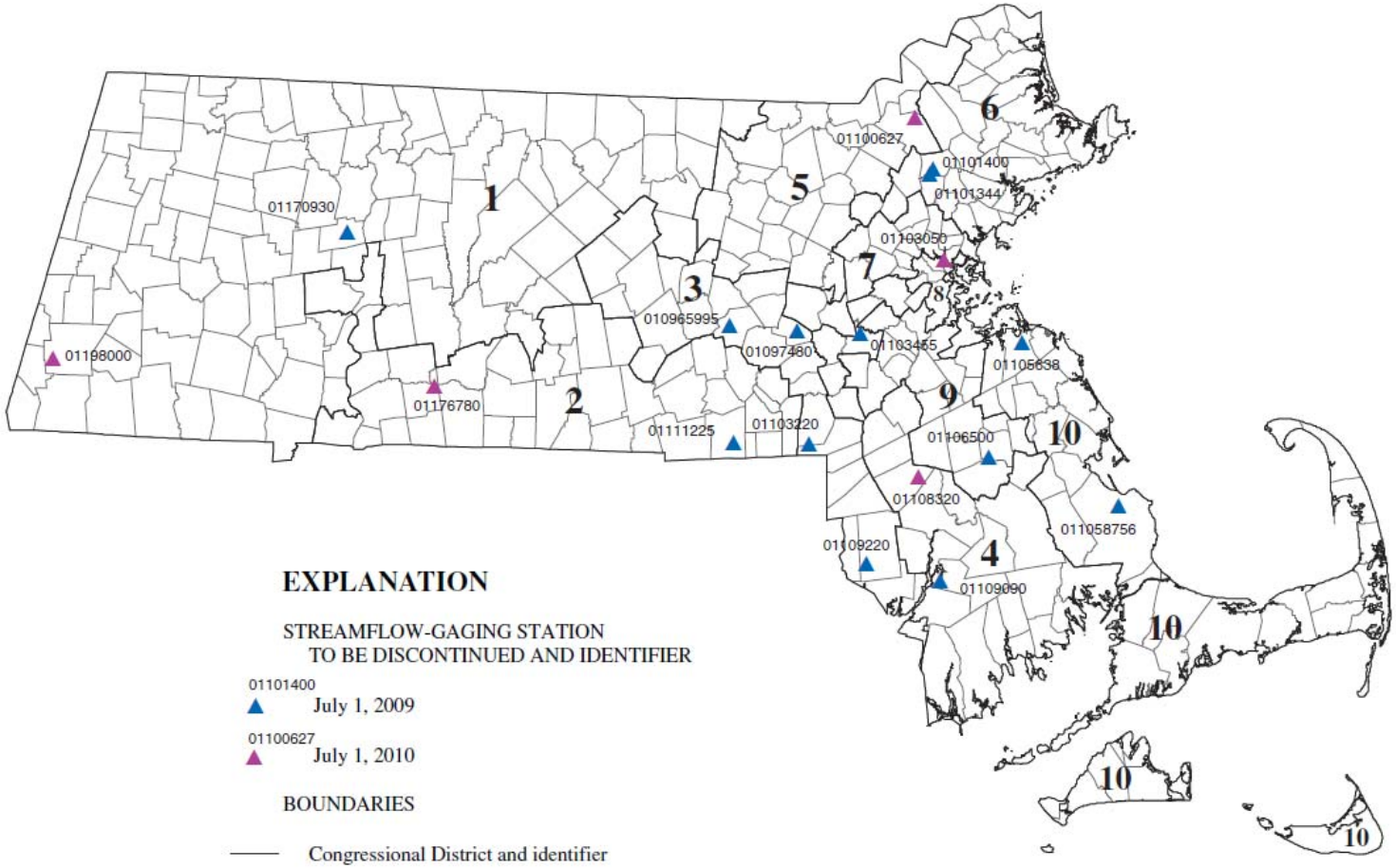
Streamgages provide information on the quantity and timing of streamflow in the Nation's rivers to help ensure adequate water resources for a healthy environment and economy and to assist in planning for future floods and droughts. Streamflow information is vital to the characterization of regional hydrologic conditions (for purposes of water supply planning and flood hazard assessments) as well as for documenting and understanding changes that occur in streamflow due to changes in land use, water use, ground-water development, and climate.

Streamflow information is used for many purposes by federal, state, and local officials, citizens, communities, businesses, and emergency response officials including:

- Decide to evacuate homes or businesses during a flood,
- Decide about the safety of recreational activities such as boating and fishing,
- Design infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and culverts,
- Determine flood hazard zones and make building and development decisions,
- Map floodplains for zoning or insurance purposes,
- Assess the sources of pollution in a watershed,
- Plan for water supply or wastewater treatment facilities,
- Manage water-quality or habitat conditions,
- Accurately estimate streamflow across the whole State for better designed water management systems and to balance human use of water and ecological health of the State's rivers, and
- Assess changes in streamflow due to long-term changes in climate.

The USGS has the principal responsibility within the federal government to provide the hydrologic information and understanding needed by others to achieve the best use and management of the Nation's water resources. To accomplish this mission, the USGS cooperates with state, local, and other federal agencies. These cooperative efforts are intended to be used to inform the public and public officials regarding hazards (such as floods and droughts), water availability, and water quality.

Station number	Station name	Period of record	Years of record	National Weather Service flood stages established	Congressional District
To be discontinued July 1, 2009					
010965995	Assabet River at Mill Road near Westborough	July 2006 - present	3	Being established	3
01097480	Sudbury River at Ashland	May 1994 - Oct. 1995, and Oct. 2006 - present	5	Being established	3
01101344	Ipswich River at Mill Street near North Reading	Sept. 2007 - present	2	Being established	6
01101400	Martins Brook near North Reading	Sept. 2007 - present	2	Being established	6
01103220	Miscoe Brook near Franklin	Sept. 2000 - present	9	Being established	3
01103455	Trout Brook at Dover	June 2007 - present	2	Being established	4
01105638	Weir River at Leavitt Street at Hingham	April 2006 - present	3	Being established	10
011058756	Eel River at Russell Mill Road near Plymouth	April 2006 - present	3	Being established	10
01106500	Matfield River at Elmwood	Dec. 2006 -present	3	Being established	9
01109090	Rattlesnake Brook near Assonet	Jan. 2007 - present	2	**Yes**	4
01109220	Palmer River at South Rehoboth	Feb. 2006 - present	3	**Yes**	3
01111225	Emerson Brook near Uxbridge	Sept. 2007 - present	2	Being established	2
01170930	Mill River at Christian Lane at Whately	Sept. 2006 - present	3	Being established	1
To be discontinued July 1, 2010					
01100627	Shawsheen River at Balmoral Street at Andover	Oct. 2006 - present	3	**Yes**	5
01103050	Mystic River at Amelia Earhardt Dam near Somerville	Dec. 2007 - present	2	Being established	8
01108320	Canoe River near Norton	July 2006 - present	3	**Yes**	4
01176780	Twelvemile Brook near North Wilbraham	July 2007 - present	2	Being established	2
01198000	Green River near Great Barrington	Oct. 1951 - Sept. 1972, March 1994 - Sept. 1996, and Aug. 2007 - present	25	**Yes**	1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EXPLANATION
STREAMFLOW-GAGING STATION
TO BE DISCONTINUED AND IDENTIFIER
01101400
July 1, 2009
01100627
July 1, 2010
BOUNDARIES
Congressional District and identifier
Town