



Making Massachusetts resilient in the face of climate change

Massachusetts Coastal Buy-back Program
as contained in climate change adaptation legislation (S.2196)

Save money - Save lives – Save nature

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Research from completed buyout programs across the country shows that these investments pay for themselves in avoided recovery costs from future floods, usually within about 10 years.

They also continue to provide savings through cost avoidance in perpetuity, since flood risk, response, and recovery costs are permanently avoided. Buyouts also provide additional public benefits, including physical buffering against future floods, public recreational space, and enhancement of wildlife habitat.

In addition, those who live in harm's way and first responders no longer put their lives at risk from storm floods, surges, and collapsing roads and buildings.

Finally, buyout programs can result in restoration of coastal habitat for wildlife, and help physically adapt our coastlines to the inevitability of sea-level rise. Such adaptation is an unavoidable task that we can either choose to undertake in an orderly fashion or wait to have imposed on us through emergency response to the next extreme weather disasters we know are coming to our coasts.

A Massachusetts coastal buy-back program has repeatedly been recommended to both the Governor and legislature, as shown in the following instances:

- Massachusetts Coastal Hazards Commission: *Conserve coastal land and minimize loss through acquisition of storm-prone properties from willing sellers in fee or through conservation restrictions and easements*
 - Recommendation #14; Preparing for the Storm: Recommendation for Management of Risk from Coastal Hazards in Massachusetts; May 2007
- Massachusetts Climate Change Adaptation Report: *Seek to reduce the number of vulnerable coastal properties through land acquisition from willing sellers in fee, or by conservation restrictions;*
 - Section 8 Coastal Zone and Ocean; submitted by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and the Adaptation Advisory Committee; September 2011
- Massachusetts Coastal Erosion Commission: *Support the implementation of a voluntary program that would facilitate the "buy-back" of high hazard or storm-damaged properties, as supported by cost/benefit analyses and other assessments.*
 - Volume 1- Report and Recommendations (to the Governor and Legislature;) Strategy #7-B; January 7, 2015.
- Environmental Bond of 2014: An Act providing for the preservation and improvement of land, parks, and clean energy in the Commonwealth. \$20 million (line: 2000-7060) available *for purchase of storm damaged properties.*

In this last instance, the legislature actually took action in 2014 by providing funding, but the administration never did anything with it. Hence, CAMP's statutory requirement to start the program.