Massachusetts Bays
NATIONAL ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP

Margherita Pryor
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 1
5 Post Office Square
Boston MA 02109

July 20, 2026

Dear Margherita:

MassBays is pleased to submit the Massachusetts Bays National Estuary Partnership (MassBays) application for funding under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 (IIJA), to implement this Federal Fiscal Year 2026 workplan. With this letter and following workplan, we continue our work under a three-year incremental award to expend the remaining funds appropriated to the National Estuary Programs under the law.

Based on our Long-term IIJA Plan we propose applying this year's IIJA funds to:

1. Provide a $40K subaward for projects that will advance local infrastructure needs, for example retrofitting or removal of tide gates to restore salt marsh and improve fish passage.
2. Expand upon ongoing infrastructure programs initiated with FFY24 and FFY25 funding, for example, (1) maintaining existing continuous water quality monitoring buoys, and (2) maintaining flow-through seawater tanks for eelgrass seed production and storage. Both investments advance our CCMP goals, and leverage future funding for habitat restoration.
3. Increase MassBays' capacity to disseminate and describe the outputs and outcomes of both IIJA and S.320 programs to specific target audiences. We are hiring a Communications and Development Specialist who will work closely with Regional Coordinators to apply research findings across the Bays, share recommendations based on our projects with state policy makers, and generate social and traditional media and other outreach products to highlight MassBays' (and broader National Estuary Program) successes.

MassBays' Management Committee reviewed and approved the components of this application. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any comments, suggestions, or concerns.

Sincerely,

Prassede Vella
Executive Director
Massachusetts Bays National Estuary Partnership
prassede.vella@umb.edu

Denise Ellis-Hibbett
Management Committee Chair

cc: Carol Thornber, Dean, UMass Boston School for the Environment

Massachusetts Bays National Estuary Partnership

Proposed Workplan

Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act Federal Fiscal Years 2024-2027 Funding

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A. Summary

Background

MassBays' planning area extends across 1100 coastal miles receiving input from a 7000 square mile watershed. We work across more than 50 coastal municipalities from Salisbury, MA at the New Hampshire border to Provincetown, MA at the outer end of Cape Cod. MassBays coordinates primarily with five Regional Service Providers (RSPs), each of which allocates a staff person (Regional Coordinator) to coordinate work closely with local communities to address regional priorities and help MassBays implement our Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP). The five regions and corresponding RSPs include Upper North Shore (Merrimack Valley Planning Commission), Lower North Shore (Salem Sound Coastwatch), Metro Boston (Northeastern University Marine Science Center), South Shore (North and South Rivers Watershed Association), and Cape Cod (Association to Preserve Cape Cod). Within this area, we have a range of infrastructure and restoration priority goals. For example:

- ***Building resilient communities.*** MassBays has characterized the range of stressors affecting communities across our planning area in terms of demographic factors, exposure to pollutants, geohydrologic conditions, and other environmental stressors and resources. Building healthier, more resilient communities requires interdisciplinary approaches.
- ***Responding to ecosystem shifts.*** Communities in the Gulf of Maine are experiencing changing coastal and environmental conditions that can affect local infrastructure, natural resources, economic stability, and community resilience. While the Commonwealth has invested significant capital funding in programs to help municipalities assess risks, plan proactively, and implement appropriate mitigation and adaptation strategies, some communities are unable to fully leverage these resources because of limited local capacity.
- ***Addressing regional issues.*** Massachusetts is a home-rule state, and addressing issues that cross municipal boundaries—such as dam removals, installation of stormwater BMPS, and wastewater management—requires deliberate coalition-building on a town-by-town basis. MassBays works to coordinate local efforts within a broader regional framework through our CCMP, helping communities align priorities, share resources, and implement effective, watershed-based solutions.

MassBays has and will continue to apply IIJA funds to respond to these needs, through planning and implementation of infrastructure improvements with municipalities, habitat restoration alongside community partners, and building monitoring infrastructure that will serve all of these efforts.

2022-2025 Projects
Over the past four years, MassBays distributed a significant portion of the IIJA funding to subawardees for projects to be implemented over multiple years in MassBays communities. Funds have enabled us to launch new infrastructure to support monitoring and restoration in the Bays and to address priority issues related to water quality. FFY24 and FFY25 monies have been allocated to further infrastructure work for water quality and habitat health improvement to support coastal communities and a thriving blue economy. Accomplishments include:

- Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) was awarded $260,000 from IIJA FFY22 for a project that has significantly built-up capacity of the City of Malden to improve their stormwater management program for the benefit of the Malden River. The scope included: regulatory support; stormwater management and funding approaches research and analysis, green stormwater infrastructure, and community engagement.

- Merrimack River Watershed Council (MRWC) also received $260,000 under IIJA FFY22 to engage communities in watershed planning for the Shawsheen River and the Spicket River .

- In collaboration with the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, MassBays applied FFY23 IIJA funding to construct new flow-through tanks, dedicated to eelgrass seed storage for restoration efforts, in their Cat Cove facility in Salem. This facility is intended to expand its capabilities beyond eelgrass and will be available for use for MassBays work. Some of the results leveraged grant funding from Woods Hole Sea Grant supported a pilot project that included field testing of seed viability.

- The Association to Preserve Cape Cod (MassBays' Cape Cod Regional Service Provider) was awarded $85,000 from IIJA FFY24 to work with partners on the restoration of salt marsh vegetation in Sesuit Creek, Dennis, MA. Opening the culvert did not restore salt marsh habitat to the degree expected. Long-term monitoring helped identify the factors contributing to limiting recovery and guided the restoration strategies currently being implemented. IIJA funding supported planting 90,000 *Spartina* plants and current subsequent monitoring for the return of the native vegetation.

- MassBays engaged USGS to purchase and deploy buoys in three sites across MassBays; one system was deployed during the summer of 2024 as a pilot. All three were deployed in summer 2025. A brief preliminary report was developed but sample analysis and a technical report are currently in progress.

Status and accomplishments of these projects are described in Section B.

2026-2027 Proposed Work and Staffing

Proposed work under this year's IIJA funding will be led by MassBays' Central Staff based in Boston and will include engagement with several partners. Projects will include:

- ***Improving local management of tide gates*** to support marsh health, beginning with structures prioritized as high impact.
- ***Leveraging partnerships with EPA Region 1, USGS, and MassBays RSPs*** to support quality assurance of data collected via continuous monitoring buoys.
- ***Conducting discrete sampling*** to validate long-term, continuous monitoring at three sites in the Bays.
- ***Testing seed-based restoration of eelgrass***, augmented by funding provided by WHOI Sea Grant in 2024.
- ***Establishing a new strategic communications and development effort*** with the hiring of a skilled and experienced communications specialist familiar with MassBays' target audiences and needs regarding increased visibility and more robust uptake of recommendations and findings generated through our research and programming.
- ***Reviewing and updating the MassBays Monitoring Plan*** to guide MassBays monitoring and research work to address local priorities and inform decision-making. With IIJA funds, MassBays will hire an experienced Environmental Scientist to review the plan and to expand the water quality monitoring program in accordance with the goals of the CCMP.

CCMP Programmatic outcomes

MassBays' CCMP calls for programs that will deliver on the following three programmatic outcomes, all of which will be addressed by this year's workplan:

- ***Information about habitat conditions across the Bays is documented and disseminated via a targeted communications strategy.*** State of the Bays reporting

is a requirement of CWA §320, and a focus of MassBays' outreach and communication efforts.

- ***A majority of MassBays municipalities implement habitat protection and restoration practices.*** MassBays' RSPs will work with communities to identify and implement restoration and protection efforts that are grounded in scientific research and best practices, as well as local expertise.

- ***Measurable progress toward target conditions across the MassBays planning area.*** At the same time, funding dedicated to providing technical support to tide gate owner-operators will expand healthy marsh area and demonstrate the importance of sound management.

B. Completed Major Projects and Activities (July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2

Prassede Vella
2026-07-27 18:19:00

Thanks Mary for catching. Corrected the most recent project year?

MassBays' IIJA Workplan for FFY2025 was guided by the ***Goals and Strate***

Goal 1. MassBays provides new resources to support research and manageme
- Strategy 1.1 Make new data available, especially to address gaps in kn
- Strategy 1.2 Support valid (QA/QC) data collection and use
- Strategy 1.3. Analyze and present existing data in multiple formats to document baselines and trends

Goal 2. MassBays reaches all planning-area municipalities with actionable information about coastal habitats
- Strategy 2.1 Support and conduct research to address gaps in knowledge and inform policy and actions regarding ecosystem conditions and functions
- Strategy 2.2 Provide education, training, and technical support; share case studies (successful and not); and support collaboration and cooperation on specific topics
- Strategy 2.3 Increase community engagement in decision making

Goal 3. MassBays provides regular and locally informed State of the Bays reporting that reflects the unique characteristics of MassBays assessment units (embayments, rocky shore, barrier beach), and documents progress to inform local action and progress toward target conditions.
- Strategy 3.1 Establish target (improved) water quality and habitat conditions tied to desired uses and ecosystem services, and document progress toward those targets.
- Strategy 3.2 Guide local action to expand habitat and improve water quality according to targets
- Strategy 3.3 Maintain MassBays' National Estuary Program status

All activities fall under the ***IIJA-supported tasks*** listed in the funding guidance, which are:
1) Accelerate and more extensively implement the CCMP
2) Build the adaptive capacity of ecosystems and communities relative to ecosystem shifts

The following list of accomplishments is organized according to the CCMP Strategies included in our CCMP and were to be completed by June 30, 2026. Each project description includes the following:

Title
BIL-supported Tasks: Per list (1-2) above
Objective: Project-specific objective
Partners: Collaborators not directly funded by MassBays/IIJA funds
Status: as of June 2026
Accomplishments and Deliverables: completed products

Strategy 1.1 Make new data available, especially to address gaps in knowledge

Title	**Initiate long-term monitoring for MassBays' study area (Central Staff)**
BIL Task	(1) Accelerate and more extensively implement the CCMP
Objective	Initiate deployment of sensors to implement continuous water quality monitoring
Partners	STAC, USGS
Status	***Ongoing*** Five priority sites for continuous monitoring selected, to be phased over the course of IIJA incremental funding. Three sensor systems are deployed, an additional two systems will be added when more funding is available.
Accomplishments and deliverables	
Collaboration with USGS	From June through end of October 2025, MassBays and USGS deployed three multisensory buoys, one in each of southern Duxbury Bay (a hot spot for oyster culture and an important part of the local economy), the Lower Merrimack River which receives waters from upstream wastewater treatment plants and from CSOs, and a dockside system at the mouth of the Danvers River which previous data showed to be a major source of contamination to Salem Sound. Data are currently being analyzed in conjunction with discreet samples collected as part of the monitoring program from across the same embayments. For example, data from the Lower Merrimack River will be used to inform the installation of an oyster upweller by the city of Newburyport.
Collaboration with NROC	ThreepCO2 sensors procured with funding from the Northeast Regional Ocean Council (NROC) were deployed in 2025; FFY23 funding was applied to data management by MassBays' Senior Scientist. The data collected are very important for shellfish farmers and aquacultures in addition to scientists. Having a healthy seafood source is both an asset to communities as well as strengthening the fishing industry.

Title	**Develop diadromous fish habitat target (Central Staff, All Regions)**
BIL Task	(1) Accelerate and more extensively implement the CCMP
Objective	Increase the number of coastal habitats addressed by the CCMP
Partners	EPA ORD, MA Division of Marine Fisheries, Cape Cod Extension Service, MIT Sea Grant, Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC)
Status	Completed Fall 2025
Accomplishments and deliverables	
New ETT data layer available	Diadromous fish migration routes and upstream spawning/habitat areas have been mapped, and the layer was incorporated into ETT in December 2025.

Strategy 1.2 Support valid (QA/QC) data collection and use

Title	AquaQAPP management and improvements (Central Staff)
CWA Core Program	(2) Identifying polluted waters and developing plans to restore them
Objective	Funded under IIJA to increase the value and use of citizen monitoring data for decision-making across the region by assisting monitoring groups with QAPP development. AquaQAPP revision was needed after EPA released updated QAPP guidance.
Partners	Center for Coastal Studies, Ethan Mick LLC, Monitoring Coordinators Network, MA Department of Environmental Protection, EPA Region 1
Status	AquaQAPP is currently under revision, to be completed by October 2027.
Contracting	Contracts in place with partners Ethan Mick and Center for Coastal Studies
Provide AquaQAPP outreach and track its use	Presented at local and regional venues to demonstrate AquaQAPP and promote its use in developing Quality Assurance Project Plans.
Expand and improve AquaQAPP to meet new EPA standard	Retained two contractors to identify tool design changes necessary to be in compliance with new QAPP standard. At the same time, address numerous wish list items to improve functionality of the tool. Anticipated to be beta tested and finalized by October 2027, with training provided to user groups.
One-on-one tech support & training	Continued to provide training and technical assistance to water quality and habitat monitoring programs coastwide.

Strategy 3.2 Guide and assist local action to expand habitat and improve water quality according to targets

Title	Advancing stormwater management to improve water quality and address flooding in the City of Malden (Mystic River Watershed Association) (Central Staff, Metro Boston)
BIL Task	(1) Accelerate and more extensively implement the CCMP (2) Build the adaptive capacity of ecosystems and communities relative to ecosystem shifts
Objective	To promote the development of a stormwater management program that reduces nutrient runoff and improves anadromous fish habitat, among other benefits, using a variety of tools, including updated Stormwater Ordinances and Regulations; a comprehensive gap analysis of municipal practices across departments; a proposal for funding schemes; and other best management practices
Partners	City of Malden, Horsely-Witten Group
Status	No-cost extension granted through December 2025 with a minor scope adjustment to respond to Gap Analysis findings, specifically the need for more capacity building.
Accomplishments and deliverables	
Stormwater utility/alternative funding study underway	A final study with findings and management recommendations was provided to the City of Malden and to MassBays in December 2025. The PI presented the work and findings to the MassBays Management Committee in March 2026 (Presentation).
Infiltration trench demonstration project planning	A demonstration project, designed to introduce and train Malden DPW staff in installation of infiltration trenches, was completed by December 2025.

New permit request template in use	In response to the Gap Analysis findings, the project team developed a template to guide permittees through the steps and appropriate contacts to work with as they propose activities that impact stormwater and stormwater infrastructure.

Title	**Prototyping and testing biomass-based mats with pre-grown Spartina alterniflora for a community "DIY-able," deployable living shoreline solution for urban coastlines (Metro Boston)**
BIL Task	(1) Accelerate and more extensively implement the CCMP (2) Build the adaptive capacity of ecosystems and communities relative to ecosystem shifts
Objective	Emerald Tutu, with project oversight from the Northeastern University Marine Science Center (Metro Boston Regional Service Provider for MassBays), will construct a simple nursery system to grow salt marsh cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*) from seed within biomass-based mats that can be deployed as urban living shoreline prototypes at existing permitted test sites. Growth of *S. alterniflora* will be compared across the different types of biomass used as substrate in the mats and among seed cohorts collected from different salt marshes to determine the most successful combinations of substrate type and seed source for future use. Emerald Tutu will engage the East Boston community in construction and assessment efforts throughout the project and will share lessons learned on the Emerald Tutu website.
Partners	The Emerald Tutu, East Boston communities
Status	Project is in the final steps as deliverables and report are being compiled. Expected 8/31/2026.
Accomplishments and deliverables	
Build nursery cold frame and irrigation system, fabricate biomass-based mats, and sow seeds	Biomass-based mats (20-40 mats; ~500-1,000 square ft total) with *S. alterniflora* growing in irrigated cold frames
Assess growth of *S. alterniflora* plants in biomass-based mats by substrate type and seed source	Performance data published on the Emerald Tutu website, emerald-tutu.com
Organize open community workshops on nursery development, growing *S. alterniflora*, and constructing and assessing living shoreline mats	Dates, locations, and numbers of participants from community workshops held by Emerald Tutu; Initial Emerald Tutu Guide published on the Emerald Tutu website, emerald-tutu.com

Title	**Sesuit Creek Salt Marsh Restoration – Planting Implementation Project (Cape Cod)**
BIL Task	(1) Accelerate and more extensively implement the CCMP (2) Build the adaptive capacity of ecosystems and communities relative to ecosystem shifts
Objective	The Association to Preserve Cape Cod (APCC) (MassBays' Cape Cod Regional Service Provider) is advancing an adaptive restoration effort at the Sesuit Creek salt marsh in Dennis, building on the successful 2008 tidal restoration that improved marsh hydrology but left persistent unvegetated areas upstream. The project will expand salt marsh plantings to stabilize sediments, encourage revegetation, and improve long-term marsh resilience while informing restoration strategies at similar sites across Cape Cod. Supported by multiple partners and existing funding, additional support would allow APCC to increase the planting area, conduct post-planting monitoring, and generate valuable lessons for future regional salt marsh restoration projects.
Partners	Cape Cod Conservation District, MA Division of Ecological Restoration, NRCS, Town of Dennis, MA Office of Coastal Zone Management, USFWS, NOAA, MA Department of Transportation, Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment.
Status	90,000 plants were planted in Spring 2026 - completed. Post-planting monitoring is in planning stages – ongoing.
Accomplishments and deliverables	
Plant acquisition, mobilization, staging, planting, and post-planting assessment and monitoring	90,000 plantings in previously unvegetated areas with community engagement; post-planting monitoring in place.

Title	**Building Capacity for Seed-Based Eelgrass Restoration (Central Staff)**
BIL Task	(7) Protecting Large Aquatic Ecosystems
Objective	1. Accelerate and more extensively implement the CCMP 2. Build adaptive capacity of ecosystems and communities relative to ecosystem shifts
Partners	MA Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF), Salem State University (SSU)
Status	With IIJA funds over the last 5 years, MassBays and DMF converted part of the underutilized Cat Cove Marine Lab into a dedicated eelgrass restoration center. Funds cover lab supplies, tank equipment, staff time, and field seed collections. Also covered is 1-2 part-time lab technician student co-op(s) from SSU. Related, remaining FFY23 funds will be used to construct an outdoor "tank barn" that will be dedicated to processing and storing eelgrass seeds for restoration efforts across the state. These funds have addressed a critical need to have a place where research and production can take place and to help

	transform existing facilities into a useful place instead of having to build another structure. ***Ongoing:*** Lab infrastructure is in place, facility is operational and supporting active restoration projects, and design plans for additional outdoor expansion are drafted.
Accomplishments and deliverables	
Contracting	New FY contracts are in place with partners DMF and SSU
Co-op student hired	SSU biology student will perform daily operational lab, field, and tank tasks.
Supplies procured	Expendable lab supplies (WQ test strips, etc.) and other materials for tank operations have been procured
Tanks installed and online	Tanks are installed in the lab space and are receiving flow-through seawater, ready to accept eelgrass biomass

Title	**Develop solutions to flooding and water quality impairments in Merrimack River tributaries (Merrimack River Watershed Council, Upper North Shore)**
BIL Task	(1) Accelerate and more extensively implement the CCMP (2) Build the adaptive capacity of ecosystems and communities relative to ecosystem shifts
Objective	Goals include: 1) Integrate community input into watershed planning and solutions to flooding and water pollution on the Spicket and Shawsheen Rivers; 2) Complete the watershed planning necessary to prepare municipalities and communities for development and prioritization of specific infrastructure improvements; 3) Facilitate inter-municipal collaboration, data-sharing, and project prioritization; and 4) Deliver the benefits of flood mitigation and pollution remediation to communities
Partners	Cities of Lawrence and Methuen, neighborhood groups, volunteers
Status	***Completed.*** Shawsheen River watershed plan and BMP [illegible] no-cost extension through 7/30/25 granted for completi[illegible] Watershed Plan.
Accomplishments and deliverables	
Spicket River watershed plan data sets shared	Merrimack River Watershed Council developed a data viewer: https://merrimack.org/spicketriver/
Water quality monitoring conducted to support watershed planning	With funding from EPA and MassBays, MassBays collected and analyzed samples in the mainstem of the Merrimack River.
Watershed based plan for the Shawsheen	The Shawsheen River Watershed Plan was submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection for approval in summer 2025 and subsequently shared on with MassBays and on MRWC's website.

Mary F Harris
2026-07-27 17:56:00

These dates are confusing. Was this all completed in Spring 2025? Can you clarify?

C. Proposed Projects and Activities

This workplan includes details of projects and activities for FFY2026, the final yearly workplan under this incremental award, budgeting $909,800 per year. The initial workplan for this award included a three-year budget. The proposed work for this year does vary from that proposal, primarily because of shifting funding availability and a desire to complete programs already underway. Our proposed work with funding under Federal Fiscal Year 2026 remain aligned with and driven by the following Goals and Strategies described in the CCMP:

Goal 1. MassBays provides new resources to support research and management in the Bays.
Strategy 1.1 Address data gaps
Strategy 1.2 Support valid (QA/QC) data collection and use

Goal 2. MassBays reaches all planning-area municipalities with actionable information about coastal habitats
Strategy 2.1 Support research to inform policy and actions
Strategy 2.2 Technical support and communications
Strategy 2.3 Increase community engagement in decision making

Goal 3. MassBays provides regular and locally informed State of the Bays reporting that reflects the unique characteristics of MassBays assessment units (embayments, rocky shore, barrier beach), to document progress and inform local action and progress toward target conditions.
Strategy 3.1 Establish target (improved) water quality and habitat conditions tied to desired uses and ecosystem services, and document progress toward those targets
Strategy 3.2 Guide local action for expanded habitat and improved water quality
Strategy 3.3 Maintain MassBays' National Estuary Program status

All activities fall under the ***IIJA -supported tasks*** listed in the funding guidance, which are:

1) Accelerate and more extensively implement the CCMP
2) Build the adaptive capacity of ecosystems and communities relative to ecosystem shifts

Our proposed activities also contribute to the following ***CCMP long-term outcomes***:

A) Sustainable NEP
B) Improved habitat continuity and restored hydrology
C) Improved water quality
D) Resilient coastal habitat, including nature-based coastal protection
E) Restored natural communities
F) Robust interagency and interdisciplinary collaboration and partnerships
G) Well-informed, multisector input to decision making

The tables of proposed activities below, organized according to MassBays' CCMP Strategies, include:

Title (Region), Budget/LOE: Activity name and MassBays geographic region in which it will be carried out, and Level of Effort
Description*:* Status (New or Ongoing), project activities and objectives
BIL-supported Tasks*:* Per list (1-2) above
Long-term CCMP Outcome*:* Per list (A-G) above
Partners*:* Collaborators not directly funded by MassBays/BIL funds
Timeline & Deliverables*:* Product(s) expected, and the quarter (Q1-Q4) projected for their completion

Strategy 1.1 Make new data available, especially to address specific gaps in knowledge

Title (Region/Staff), BIL funds + LOE	Description	BIL Task CCMP outcome	Partners	Timeline & Deliverables
Maintain and expand long-term monitoring network for MassBays' region SECWQALS (Central Staff, UNS, LNS, SS) 400h CS	***Ongoing*** With funding from the FFY26 workplan and Joint Finance Agreement (JFA), MassBays will work with USGS to deploy sensors at three sites (Danvers River [dockside], Duxbury Bay [offshore buoy], and Merrimack River [offshore buoy provided by DEP]) as aligned with State of the Bays data needs to address community priorities. Environmental Scientist will manage associated discrete sampling and analysis with assistance from the UNS, LNS, and SS RSPs.	(1) Accelerate and more extensively implement the CCMP (C) Improved water quality	USGS, Center for Coastal Studies, Salem Sound Coastwatch (S.320 funding), Merrimack Valley Planning Council (S.320 funding), North & South Rivers Watershed Association (S. 320 funding), Duxbury Bay Maritime School, towns of Plymouth, Newburyport, Beverly, Salem, EPA Region 1 Lab (Chelmsford), Salem State University	(Q1-Q)2) Deploy sensors (buoys) at pre-selected locations, sampling plan for discrete sampling; samples collected and analyzed. Q2) implement data management protocols; (Q3) Data analysis of FFY26 samples; plan for next stage of deployment (Q4) Technical report
Restoring eelgrass using innovative approaches in Massachusetts and via a regional collaboration (Central Staff) Woods Hole Sea Grant (Y2 amount) 650h CS	***Ongoing*** Implement Year 2 of pilot program to address the questions of 1) when and where reproductive eelgrass shoots should be harvested, 2) potential impacts of seed harvest on a donor meadow, 3) the quantity, quality and germination rate of Massachusetts seeds, and 4) the regulatory processes needed to permit large-scale routine harvest and seeding.	(1) Accelerate and more extensively implement the CCMP (E) Restored natural communities (D) Resilient coastal habitat, including nature-based coastal protection	DMF, SSU, WHOI NEPs from Maine to North Carolina, National Parks Service, USGS, NWF, academic institutions (BU, Stony Brook, Northeastern, NGOs others TBD)	(Q1-Q4) Conduct field surveys, finalize modeling and analyses, prepare Best Practice Guide and technical reporting. (Q1-Q3) Convene partners, develop regional project concept and prepare grant proposals.

	Ongoing Convene partners and lead grant pursuits to secure funding for a regional collaboration. Lead new eelgrass restoration efforts in collaboration with other NEPs, academic, agency and NGO partners across the East coast.			

Strategy 2.3 Increase community engagement in decision making

Title (Region/Staff), BIL funds + LOE	Description	BIL Task CCMP outcome	Partners	Timeline & Deliverables
Disseminate findings, tools, and recommendations to increase engagement among multiple audiences (Communications and Development Specialist; Director) 200h CS	***Ongoing*** MassBays continues to provide one-on-one assistance to entities responsible for high-priority tide gates that are impacting salt marsh extent and condition, as an add-on to the RAE National Estuary Program Watershed Grant.	(1) Accelerate and more extensively implement the CCMP (E) Restored natural communities (D) Resilient coastal habitat, including nature-based coastal protection	Tide gate owners (Kingston, Scituate, Sandwich, Weymouth, Salisbury), CEI Inc., RCs, Tide Gates Science Advisory Committee	(Q1) Continue outreach to owners of priority sites, with assistance from RCs; design and planning for priority tides gates; (Q2) Exploring collaboration with DER to manage Town Creek tide gate in Salisbury, MA. (Q4) Documentation of support provided and potential implementation actions; (Q1-Q4) Proposals submitted for funding as becomes available.

Strategy 3.2 Guide local action for expanded habitat and improved water quality

Title (Region), Budget + LOE	Description	CWA core program CCMP outcome	Partners	Timeline & Deliverables
Building Capacity for Seed-Based Eelgrass Restoration (Central Staff) 300h CS	*Ongoing but Expanded* With BIL/IIJA funds over the last 5 years, MassBays and DMF have converted part of the underutilized Cat Cove Marine Lab into a dedicated eelgrass restoration center. Funds cover lab supplies, tank equipment, staff time, and field seed collections. Also covered is a part-time lab technician student co-op from SSU.	(6) Protecting coastal waters through the National Estuary Program	DMF, SSU	(Q1-Q2) Field and lab studies (Q3-Q4) Data analysis and progress reporting

	Relatedly, IIJA FFY22 funds will be used to construct an outdoor "tank barn" that will be dedicated to processing and storing eelgrass seeds for restoration efforts across the state. 50% of a graduate student's time, boat fees, and a field work rental pickup truck are also funded by BIL for eelgrass restoration and related infrastructure projects.			
Restoring eelgrass through debris removal (Central Staff) TBD	***New*** Funds will be used to remove a debris field associated with a felled wooden pier from the eelgrass meadow off Winter Island, Salem, MA. Consultants and contractors will be retained to manage the project.	(6) Protecting coastal waters through the National Estuary Program	SSCW, City of Salem, EPA R1	(Q1) Field monitoring, permitting, planning (Q2-Q3) Debris removal and disposal (Q4) Monitoring and reporting

D. Budget Narratives

Assumptions – IIJA funding allocation to MassBays will be $909,800. Subawards to Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) and Salem State University (SSU) are based on existing scopes of work previously executed and renewable for the three-year period of this incremental award.

There are other activities that are funded under the previous work plan and are ongoing. In addition, we have a short list of priority projects that will be funded by remaining FFY25 funds in addition to FFY26 funds.

FFY26 Proposed Spending

These notes refer to Table 1, MassBays National Estuary Program Proposed IIJA Budget, FFY26. We request reimbursement of pre-award costs, up to 90 days, for the work included in this plan. The funding is distributed over two Periods of Work, July 1 2026 to June 30 2027, and July 1 2027 to June 30 2027.

Salaries for four staff: Director (0.478 FTE), Coastal Habitat Program Manager (0.478 FTE), Environmental Scientist (0.5 FTE), and Communications and Development Specialist (0.5 FTE). In addition, MassBays will fund a second year for a Habitat Program Graduate Research Assistant in this project period, with funding for two semesters full-time (18h/week for 40 weeks = 720h) and full-time for summer (480h/summer) at $38.48/h.

Fringe benefits: Fringe benefits are negotiated annually between the Commonwealth of MA, UMB and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Fringe benefits are costs associated with employee related expenses including health plan, pension plan, and workman's compensation expenses among others. UMB has four fringe rates in accordance with the University's projected FY2027 Fringe Benefits and Payroll Tax Rates memorandum and NICRA.

Rate #1 General Fringe, 43.99%
Rate #2 Health and Welfare, $33 Bi-weekly/FTE
Rate #3 Payroll Tax, 2.12%
Rate #4 Worker's Compensation Insurance, 0.17%

These rates are applied based on the personnel appointment type, benefitted/non-benefitted status, period of service and salary rates. In this case the appointment, benefits status, period of service and applicable rates are as follows:

Personnel	**Appointment**	**Period of service**	**Applicable Rates**
PI Prassede Vella	Professional Benefitted	Calendar	Rates 1, 2, 3, 4
Coastal Habitat Program Manager Jill Carr	Professional Benefitted	Calendar	Rates 1, 2, 3, 4
Environmental Scientist TBD	Professional Benefitted	Calendar	Rates 1, 2, 3, 4
Communications & Development Specialist (TBD)	Professional Benefitted	Calendar	Rates 1, 2, 3, 4

No fringe is applied for academic year Graduate Assistantships; fringe costs of $199/year and $210/year are provided for summer hours in Periods 1 and 2, respectively.

Travel
No travel funds are requested.

Supplies
No funds for supplies are requested.

Subawards (Table 2)
See tables below

Indirect Charges
The University of Massachusetts Boston has a Facilities and Administrative overhead rate of 36.4%, which is a federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement between University of Massachusetts Boston and the Department of Health and Human Services for Other Sponsored Programs. UMass Boston's threshold for equipment is $5,000. Indirect costs are calculated using Modified Total Direct Costs.

Matching Funds
Matching funds are not required under this cooperative agreement.

Table 1. Proposed spending, Federal Fiscal Year 2026

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Grant Application (FFY26) Massachusetts Bays National Estuary Program Proposed Expenditures		
Personnel	**7/1/26-6/30/27**	
total, salaries +fringe	**$ 301,100**	
Contractual		
	$ -	
Supplies *(none)*		
subtotal, supplies	**$ -**	
Travel *(none)*		
subtotal, travel	**$ -**	
Subawards		
Local infrastructure project (TBD)	$ 40,000	
MassBays Monitoring Program	$ 450,000	
	$ 490,000	
Other *(none)*		
subtotal, other	**$ -**	
Total Direct	**$ 791,000**	
Indirect		
36.4% MTDC (Base of $326,100)	$ 326,100	
subtotal, indirect	**$ 326,100**	
Total Request, FFY26	**$ 909,800**	