



Senate Ways and Means Committee
Massachusetts General Court

Dear Senator DiDomenico, Dear Senator Jehlen,

June 19, 2014

My name is Quinton Zondervan, I am writing you as the President of [Green Cambridge](#), a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization based in Cambridge working on sustainability, climate change and a healthy environment for all. It is with this in mind that I urge you to support **[Amendment #88 to an Act providing for the preservation and improvement of land, parks and clean energy in the Commonwealth \(H.4138\): Placing the Belmont Silver Maple Forest into Conservancy.](#)**

Specifically, the amendment states: Mr. Rogers of Cambridge moves that the bill be amended in Section 2A, in item 2000-7058, in line 36, by inserting after "Oyster Pond" the following: "provided further, that \$9,000,000 shall be expended as a grant to the town of Belmont for the purpose of placing the Silver Maple Forest, also known as the Belmont Uplands, into conservancy"; and in said item by striking out the figures "\$35,000,000" and inserting in place thereof the figures "\$44,000,000".

The development project at the so-called Belmont Uplands, currently proposed by [O'Neil Properties](#) would directly impact the capacity of the surrounding area and the immediate site in withstanding the effects of climate change. Specifically, the current proposal does not adequately meet the needs for storm water management in 25, 50, 75 and 100 year storms. All of which are expected to increase in occurrence and frequency as a result of climate change.

According to a [report prepared by the noted hydrology firm Horsley and Witten](#), the current proposal would result in the significant loss of vegetation and associated evapotranspiration. These losses would elevate the current water table, inundating the proposed underground storm water storage basin. Under an extreme weather event, the surrounding infrastructure would already be inundated, leaving no room for storm water drainage and overflow of currently combined sewage and storm water management systems, flooding the surrounding community and the planned housing project.

H.4138 would allow for the potential purchasing of the parcel, priced at full and fair market value, and in so doing, would protect the surrounding community from the possibility of additional storm water flooding as a result of this development, as well as preserve an important wildlife habitat for numerous species within the Alewife Reservation.

This legislation is critical for the climate resiliency of Arlington, Belmont and Cambridge, and should be considered an important component of the protection of the Commonwealth from more frequent inland flooding events due to climate change.

Thanks very much for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Quinton Y. Zondervan
President
Green Cambridge

Cc: Members of Ways and Means Committee