



**Clarksburg, MA** – Today, Congressman John Olver announced federal funding has been secured to remove the 15 foot high and 200 foot long Briggsville Dam in the town of Clarksburg, Massachusetts. Removal of the outdated dam will help the owner, Cascade School Supplies, avoid excessive financial hardship for repairs to a dam that has long since outlived its usefulness. American Rivers has contributed vital financial and technical support to this project.

Removing the dam will help Cascade avoid abandoning the facility, laying off employees, and leaving the community without one of its largest employers. Cascade School Supplies has been in business for 78 years and seasonally employs over 150 people in Berkshire County, including their facility in Clarksburg.

A diverse group of public/private partners are working together to remove the Briggsville Dam and restore the North Branch of the Hoosic River. In addition to American Rivers and Cascade, project partners include USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, (NRCS) the Town of Clarksburg, the Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture, the Wildlife Conservation Society, through its Wildlife Action Opportunities Fund with support provided by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Trout Unlimited and the Hoosic River Watershed Association.

"American Rivers applauds the leadership of the dam's owner, Cascade School Supplies, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Congressman Olver in their critical efforts," said Rebecca Wodder, President of American Rivers. "American Rivers has been involved in the removal of hundreds of dams around the country, but the opportunity to restore the Hoosic River and create and preserve jobs in Clarksburg makes this project really special. American Rivers was proud to contribute extensive technical support, leadership, and funding to complete this collaborative project."

"The bottom line here is that we're saving jobs. The dam's presence was putting Cascade

School Supplies in jeopardy—an important employer in the region. Through a strong public-private partnership, we will now be able to remove the dam and the trouble it is causing Cascade School Supplies,” said Congressman Olver.

The project involves removing the dam, stabilizing the banks and planting trees, protecting an upstream bridge, and restoring river habitat. The restoration, which will start mid-October and is expected to be completed by mid-December, will improve over 30 miles of high quality headwater streams and exemplary trout habitat. The project supports priority actions of the Massachusetts Wildlife Action Plan by benefitting wildlife including Eastern brook trout, slimy sculpin, longnose sucker and other native fish. The longnose sucker is a state-listed species of concern.

More than 830 dam removals have been recorded nationwide. While motivation for removing dams may vary, these communities show us that restoration projects provide a multitude of benefits and often breathe new life into river communities and a renewed appreciation for free-flowing, healthy streams. American Rivers helps communities remove unneeded dams by providing educational, technical, and financial assistance.