

Baker-Polito Administration Awards \$500,000 to Amherst's Hitchcock Center for the Environment

AMHERST - May 31, 2016 - Continuing its commitment to ensuring a sustainable future for Massachusetts, the Baker-Polito Administration today announced the awarding of \$500,000 to the Hitchcock Center for the Environment for the construction of its living building project, which is a 9,000 square foot environmental education center that seeks to meet the "Living Building Challenge" standards. Once completed, the new center, which will become a place where students will be taught complex environmental issues, will need to meet performance standards, such as net zero energy and water, over a twelve month period prior to the education center receiving a full certification. Currently, fewer than ten buildings in the world have become fully certified.

"The construction and opening of the new Hitchcock Center for the Environment will have a far reaching impact on Massachusetts, and will serve as an excellent example of leadership in the field of renewable technologies," said Governor Charlie Baker. "We are proud to partner with the Hitchcock Center where thousands of students of all ages will learn the tools necessary in creating a more sustainable, Earth friendly environment."

"The new Hitchcock Center will become an important addition to the City of Amherst, the region, and the state as a whole with one of the most innovative buildings in the world," said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito. "I am excited to know that future students will not only learn about responsible environmental practices, but will witness them firsthand."

Today's announcement was preceded by a check presentation event attended by state environmental officials, including Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Matthew Beaton and Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Commissioner Leo Roy. The state officials received a tour of the center, and discussed the future plans of the building with Hitchcock Center's Board of Directors.

"The Hitchcock Center's Living Building Project demonstrates excellence in sustainability and will serve as a model for future buildings," said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton. "I am proud of the Baker-Polito Administration's dedication to ensuring that organizations dedicated to energy efficient innovation have the tools and support they need from the Commonwealth to see their projects come to fruition."

Aside from achieving net zero energy and water standards, the new Hitchcock Center for the Environment's building will feature:

- Rainwater harvesting;
- Composting restrooms;
- Four state-of-the-art adaptive classrooms and meeting spaces;
- A visitor center with live and natural history exhibits;
- Transparent, interpretive building systems that model and mimic nature;
- Outdoor courtyards, decks, and picnic areas; and
- Collaborative work spaces for a growing staff.

"The new Hitchcock Center for the Environment serves as an excellent example of state government working with private partners to support greater environmental awareness efforts," said DCR Commissioner Leo Roy. "As stewards of over 450,000 acres of public land, the Department of Conservation and Recreation is proud to support the

Baker-Polito Administration's involvement and dedication to the construction of the new center."

The \$500,000 provided by the Baker-Polito Administration was made possible by an Environmental Bond Bill, which also authorized an award of \$500,000 in Fiscal Year 2015. Previously, the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) provided the center with \$330,000 as part of the Pathways to Zero Net Energy Program to help construct the new headquarters.

"DOER is proud to partner with the Hitchcock Center through our Pathways to Zero Net Energy Program to build upon Massachusetts' proud history of being on the forefront of green and sustainable innovation," said DOER Commissioner Judith Judson. "The new Hitchcock Center for the Environment will stand as a testament to our shared commitment to ensuring a cleaner, more energy efficient Commonwealth."

"The generous support we have received from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs has allowed us to realize a vision that we thought was a dream just four years ago," said Julie Johnson, Executive Director, Hitchcock Center for the Environment. "We are grateful for our state leaders who take such bold action to promote greater environmental sustainability and who readily recognize the critical role environmental education plays towards that goal."

"The Hitchcock Center has served our region for decades as source for environmental education and sustainability. The construction of the new building with the goal of achieving the Living Building Standards further illustrate our commitment to leading the nation in combating climate change and promoting energy efficiency," said Senate President Stan Rosenberg (D-Amherst).

"It is thrilling that the Commonwealth is going to help make this building happen," said State Representative Ellen Story (D-Amherst). "It will be one of only a handful like it in the world."

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