

February 6, 2008

Peter M. Schilling
5 Baker Place
Newton Lower Falls, MA 02462

Ian Bowles
Secretary
Executive Office of Energy and
Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Secretary Bowles:

I am writing to inform you that the 4000 members of the Massachusetts/Rhode Island Council of Trout Unlimited support the Upper Housatonic River ACEC designation as proposed by the Save the Housatonic Coalition.

On January 29, 2008, my colleague Gene Chague, past president of the Taconic Chapter and former Chairman of the Massachusetts/Rhode Council, made a presentation in which he told you TU supported this ACEC designation. This letter is to amplify how important this designation is to the coldwater fisheries resources in Massachusetts.

The Berkshires is one of the strongholds of native wild brook trout in Massachusetts. The tributaries to the upper Housatonic are perhaps some of the best habitat in the Commonwealth for wild trout. There are wild trout populations in the main stem of the Housatonic as well, primarily brown trout, which tolerate warmer water temperatures in summer. But the wild brook trout will migrate to the mainstem of the Housatonic at various times of year for safety and food.

It is essential to maintain this connectivity and to protect the entire watershed if wild brook trout are going to be able to survive in Massachusetts. As Secretary of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs and Energy, you have to understand that maintaining habitat for our coldwater resources is of the utmost importance today, given the looming threats of global warming, development pressures in rural areas where these healthy tributaries exist, and the ongoing withdrawal of water from watersheds for a variety of purposes.

It is the Commonwealth's job to protect these most fragile resources, and to use the best regulatory tools available to do so. Bit by bit, our coldwater resources are still being fragmented and dissipated. If future generations of Massachusetts citizens are to enjoy the beauty and natural diversity associated with coldwater fisheries in the Berkshires, please designate the Upper Housatonic River an ACEC.

Respectfully,

Peter M. Schilling
Chairman, MA/RI Council
Trout Unlimited