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CONTACT:

David Deegan (News Media Only)
deegan.dave@epa.gov
(617) 918-1017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Massachusetts Citizens and Organizations Recognized by EPA for Environmental Achievements

BOSTON – Four individuals and five organizations in Massachusetts were recognized today at the 2018 Environmental Merit Awards ceremony of the US Environmental Protection Agency's New England regional office. The environmental leaders were among 28 recipients across New England honored for their work to protect New England's environment.

Robert L. Zimmerman Jr., William S. Napolitano and **Arthur N. Marin** were recognized with lifetime awards for many years of service to the health and environment of the state. In addition, the **Pleasant Bay Alliance of Harwich, the Food Rescue Initiative of Wellesley, Mark Richey Woodworking, Inc. of Newburyport** and **Encore Boston Harbor of Everett** were recognized as organizations for their work.

In addition to these winners, **Nancy Seidman of Cambridge** was given the **Ira Leighton "In Service to States" annual award** for environmental achievement that has had an outsized impact in the state, the region, and nationally. Seidman has been a leader on air issues all levels, playing a central role in protecting the public and environment from air pollution. Assistant commissioner of DEP's Bureau of Air and Waste until she retired in 2016, Seidman has been since then a senior advisor with the Regulatory Assistance Project, a non-profit organization dedicated to accelerating the transition to a clean, reliable, and efficient energy future.

"New England is rich with individuals, businesses, and organizations that exhibit their strong commitment to local communities and to a clean and healthful environment. EPA is very proud to recognize these meaningful accomplishments," **said EPA New England Regional Administrator Alexandra Dunn.**

EPA New England each year recognizes individuals and groups in the six New England states whose are distinguished by their work to protect or improve the region's environment. The merit awards, given since 1970, honor individuals and groups who have shown ingenuity and commitment. The Environmental Merit Awards, given for work or actions done in the prior year, are awarded in the categories of individual; business (including professional organizations); local, state or federal government; and environmental, community, academia or nonprofit organization. Also, each year EPA presents lifetime achievement awards for individuals.

This year's Environmental Awards Ceremony was dedicated to the memory of **Eddie Johnson of New Bedford**, a community activist who devoted much of his life to championing environmental, public health and environmental justice issues in his home city. [Also at the merit ceremony, EPA New England announced three awards for leaders in Children's Health, with one award going to the Massachusetts Lead in Drinking Water Team.](#)

The 2018 Merit Award Winners from Massachusetts were:

Lifetime Achievement Awards

Robert L. Zimmerman, Jr., Littleton

Bob Zimmerman of Littleton retired this summer as executive director of the Charles River Watershed Association having worked wonders for the Charles River. During a 27-year career, Zimmerman's ingenuity and vision took one of the state's dirtiest rivers and made it into one of the cleanest urban rivers in the United States. In this job, Zimmerman raised awareness of issues on the Charles, growing the organization ten-fold. He sought non-traditional solutions to age-old environmental problems. He was a strong advocate to put into place the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority's long-term plan for controlling combined sewer overflows, the backbone of the Charles River and Boston Harbor cleanup, which will dramatically reduce the flow of sewage into the Charles. He established a monitoring and field science program that provided data needed to understand the dynamics of the Charles. Zimmerman also invented SmartStorm, a rainwater harvesting system, while creating a stronger regulatory climate for rainwater recycling.

The list of Zimmerman's successes goes on, including everything from starting a fish restocking program, supporting litigation to protect water resources and developing the underlying science for a phosphorus load limit, to developing software that reduces costs on stormwater management. His advocacy led to the creation of new parklands. The long-term impact of Zimmerman's work has been to play a pivotal role in taking what was once an open sewer and turning it into the Central Park of Boston, an urban mecca that supports fishing, swimming, sailing, rowing, water-gazing, walking, running, bicycling and other recreation by some 30,000 people each day in summer. The results can be measured in the 99.5 percent reduction in sewage discharged to the Charles from CSOs and in the fact that the river meets swimming standards about 70 percent of the time, compared to less than 20 percent early in Zimmerman career. Boating is now safe nearly all the time. Zimmerman has been an inspirational leader in the watershed world.

William S. Napolitano, Taunton

Over the past three decades, the ecology of Southeastern Massachusetts, the Taunton River Watershed and the Taunton River itself has had no greater champion than William Napolitano. Napolitano's contributions to the ecological health of the region came through his role as senior environmental planner with the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District, the Taunton-based regional planning agency. In this capacity, Napolitano was one of the co-founders of the Taunton River Watershed Alliance in 1988, the first organization dedicated to serving the interests of the entire Taunton watershed. He served on its board of directors, and continues to support the organization to this day. Napolitano was instrumental the Taunton River getting federal designation as a National Wild and Scenic River, an accomplishment that took nine years of patient advocacy and quiet determination. The river's designation by Congress in 2009 was testimony to Napolitano's belief in the river's ecological significance, historical and cultural values, and its dignity as a regional treasure that had historically been overexploited and underappreciated. Napolitano championed the river fervently when few were willing to embrace that role, and made dozens of presentations to selectboards, planning boards, and community groups. The value of this critical outreach was perhaps most clearly seen in votes supporting the designation in all 10 communities along the river.

Napolitano continues to work on behalf of the river as administrative support for the Taunton River Stewardship Council, which was established to put in place the stewardship plan created when the river received its designation. Napolitano guides the council's meetings, prepares agendas, and provides critical support to council members, particularly citizen volunteers. Napolitano's wise counsel ensures that these citizen volunteers are energized to serve in their roles, and have the resources necessary to fulfill their functions as council members.

Arthur N. Marin

Arthur Marin will retire this year after more than 25 years working for the Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management, an association of the state air agencies in New England, New Jersey, and New York. Marin began there in 1991, and rose through the ranks to become executive director in 2005. In this job, he expanded on the organization's track record of cooperative state/federal relationships and provided leadership on virtually every major issue tackled by the states involving air quality and climate planning. Marin was involved in initiatives that supported innovative policy and technical approaches in air quality and climate policy. A focus of his work has been transportation-related air pollution issues, first as a regional planner with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, then as a mobile source analyst, supervisor of the Transportation Team, deputy director and ultimately as director at NESCAUM. There he supported states' adoption of clean car programs. Through advanced technology programs adopted by the states, cars and trucks have become progressively cleaner and more efficient over the years.

His work includes fostering regional approaches to address fossil fuel power plant emissions, lowering sulfur content in home heating oil, pushing for cleaner burning practices, and diesel in vehicles, and cooperation

content in home heating oil, pushing for cleaner burning gasoline and diesel in vehicles, and representing membership in forums. Through Marin's efforts, the organization has solidified the region's stature as a role model for regional and national programs. Marin is widely recognized as a strategic thinker with expertise and experience. His dedication and pragmatism contributed to numerous improvements in the region's air quality.

Government

Pleasant Bay Alliance, Harwich

Nitrogen pollution in Cape Cod's water has led to algae, hurt estuaries and damaged fish and shellfish. A plan approved by EPA in 2015 to tackle this pollution included new strategies for addressing this looming crisis and was the first such plan to include watershed-based permitting. This permitting empowered towns to work together and with the state Department of Environmental Protection as watersheds, rather than individual towns. It allowed towns to try innovative restoration approaches across boundaries. Before the 208 Plan Update, these towns acted individually, which often meant progress was stalled or efforts weren't as successful as hoped. The Pleasant Bay Alliance was formed by four towns - Orleans, Chatham, Harwich and Brewster - to coordinate the resource management plan for Pleasant Bay and its watershed. All four towns signed on to the 20-year Pleasant Bay Targeted Watershed Management Plan, designed to reduce nitrogen, find best practices for managing it, and install innovative treatments. This resulted in the first-of-its-kind watershed permit under DEP's pilot program. The four towns created a road map for other Cape communities as they work to reduce nitrogen pollution in shared watersheds. The success of restoring Cape Cod's waterways depends on trailblazers like the Pleasant Bay Alliance and its towns.

Environmental, Community, Academia, Nonprofit

Food Rescue Initiative, Wellesley

Ellen Korpi, Wellesley 3R Working Group; Sasah Purpa, Food for Free

The Food Rescue Initiative, a collaborative effort based in Wellesley, focuses on surplus food generated at schools, colleges and universities. The Family Meals Program takes donated wholesome, edible surplus food and passes it on to people in need. Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Rhode Island all have regulations aimed at keeping organic waste, including food waste, out of landfills. In September 2017, schools and colleges in the Metrowest area committed to this Food Rescue Initiative that involves donating about 20,000 meals annually to the Food for Free Family Meals Program, which feeds people in need. So far, the schools involved are Wellesley Public Schools, Babson College, Bentley University, Olin College of Engineering and Wellesley College, as well as their food service providers. With a critical mass now involved, making the program cost effective, other local institutions with leftover food are being recruited. The program was put together by the 3R working Group in Wellesley. As the group was recruiting colleges, MassBay Community College revealed that half its students surveyed said they lack reliable access to nutritious food. Food for Free worked with MassBay so its students could receive food from the program. Food insecurity in New England ranges from 9 to 13.8 percent of the population. Other communities with a willing collaborative team can replicate this program. EPA New England is now working in Rhode Island on a similar collaboration.

Business

Mark Richey Woodworking, Inc., Newburyport

This award recognizes the efforts of Mark Richey Woodworking to reduce toxic waste and save energy. This company, which makes architectural millwork products, also is known for its energy efficient manufacturing and other innovative energy initiatives, like the rooftop solar array and biomass boiler. The company has extensive experience on LEED-certified projects and helps clients navigate green building requirements. It has worked to reduce its own use of toxic chemicals and waste, and to improve worker safety. The company bought a solvent recycling unit, an ultrasonic spray gun cleaner, and a robotic spray line, and prioritized its use of water-based coatings to minimize use of solvents and volatile organic compounds. The company saw a 73 percent reduction in waste generation despite significant growth in manufacturing space, hiring, and production. As a result of its efforts, the company has cut in half its purchases of denatured alcohol to about 1,200 gallons per year. In the past, solvent was shipped as hazardous waste, but the company installed an enclosed robotic spray line that sprays a consistent coat and can be programmed to spray only the area required. Increased efficiency means the \$1.2 million will be paid back within five years.

Encore Boston Harbor, Everett

Encore Boston Harbor, a resort and casino in Everett, completed a \$68 million cleanup and restoration at the former Monsanto chemical factory site. The work involved cleaning soil, dredging contaminated sediment and creating a living shoreline along the Mystic River. When the casino licensing process began, the Mystic River Watershed Association asked applicants what they would do for the local environment. The local Everett Boston

watershed Association asked applicants what they would do for the local environment. It asked Encore Boston Harbor if it would replace the planned sheet piling with a living shoreline. The company promised to take care of all soil contamination on site, revegetate the shoreline and completely clean the sediment. They have since removed some 840,000 tons of contaminated soil and 41,000 tons of sediment, brought in 30,000 clean tons of sand for capping contaminated sediments and created a 24,000-square-foot living shoreline. Encore also is installing a co-generation facility, rainwater harvesting, a green roof and solar panels. The Mystic River Watershed Association, which nominated Encore, has used this living shoreline as a model for other riverfront landowners. The organization is collaborating with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation to build a living shoreline across the river in Somerville. The City of Everett endorsed this nomination, recognizing that this clean-up created a transformative spirit throughout the city. Encore is revitalizing an industrial, underutilized neighborhood, and opening a waterfront that had been fenced off for over a century. This project will have an impact on the region for generations to come.

Children's Health Award

Massachusetts Lead in Drinking Water Team

To make sure children in Massachusetts schools have safe drinking water, Governor Charlie Baker in 2016 asked the state Department of Environmental Protection to raise awareness about the importance of testing for lead and copper in drinking water in public schools. This led to the formation of the Massachusetts Lead in Drinking Water Team, including representatives from Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, the University of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority and other partners. The program included education to help schools establish sampling programs and to address elevated lead and copper levels. DEP contracted with the state to provide technical assistance and oversee contracted laboratory analysis, provided by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, to determine if water exceeded recommended levels for lead or copper. Results were reported to the schools, along with resources to address problem fixtures. More than 150 communities received technical assistance and more than 800 school buildings had plans mapping out all fixtures to be tested. In addition, nearly 56,000 water samples were collected from about 32,000 faucets, fountains and other fixtures in schools. The program was supported with \$2.75 million from Mass Clean Water Trust. As a result of good budgeting, sampling help is being offered to more schools in the coming year and some 200 schools are expected to be tested. Besides spreading the word about lead and copper in school drinking water, this voluntary program taught school officials how to sample so the work can continue.

Besides the Massachusetts lead team, the Children's Health Award was given this year to two other winners, who are **Mayor Charles Lombardi of North Providence, R.I.** and **the City of Claremont, NH.**

More information on EPA's Environmental Merit Awards, including photographs from the award ceremony: <https://www.epa.gov/environmental-merit-awards-new-england>

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U.S. EPA, Region 1, 5 Post Office Square - Suite 100, Boston, MA 02109-3912 United States