Posted 7/2/26, 12:45pm. Updated 7/14/26, 11:55am

MASSACHUSETTS WATER RESOURCES AUTHORITY
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Stephen Estes-Smargiassi
Executive Director

Chair: R. Tepper
Vice-Chair: A. Pappastergion
Secretary: B. Peña
Board Members:
P. Flanagan
J. Foti
B. Swett
L. Taverna
H. Vitale
J. Walsh
P. Walsh
J. Wolowicz

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING

Date: Friday July 10, 2026

Time: 10:00am

Location: Quabbin Visitor Center
100 Winsor Dam Rd., Belchertown, MA 01007
Photo ID required for entry.
The meeting will also be held virtually on Webex.

Webex Registration Link

https://mwra.webex.com/weblink/register/r2cc7049146f2d7ef0ca31a1d726c0208

Webinar number: 2331 983 7710 Password: 071026

AGENDA

I. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

II. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

III. CORRESPONDENCE TO THE BOARD

2/17/26 Resolution and Minutes, Town of Shutesbury; 4/6/26 Proclamation, Town of Belchertown; 5/12/26 Resolution, Town of Belchertown; 6/6/26 Resolution, Town of Hardwick; 6/11/26 Certified Town Meeting vote unanimously supporting a resolution regarding Quabbin equity, Town of Ware; 6/23/26 Letter from Town of Barre Selectboard Chair Dr. Maureen Marshall; Vice-chair Mark Regienus and Clerk Richard Stevens; 6/26/26 Letter from Athol Town Manager Shaun A. Suhoski; 5/9/26 Finance Committee Report for the 2026 ATM Warrant and Annual Town Meeting Results, Town of Pelham; 7/1/26 Resolution and Letter from Town of Pelham Selectboard Chair Rick Taupier; Selectboard Members Susan Cloutier and Carl Seppala; and Town Coordinator Emily Hill; 4/3/26 Letter and Attachment from Town of Petersham Selectboard Chair Deborah Poodry and Vice Chair Josh Chernin; 7/3/26 Letter from Athol Town Manager Shaun Suhoski; Barre Town Administrator Melanie Jackson; Belchertown Town Manager Steve Williams; Hardwick Town Administrator Justine Caggiano; Town of New Salem Town Coordinator Emily Hill; Town of Shutesbury Town Administrator Hayley Bolton; Stuart Beckley, Town Manager, Town of Ware; and Kelly Tyler, Town of Wendell Town Manager; Additional Correspondence.

IV. WATER POLICY AND OVERSIGHT

A. Contract Amendments/Change Orders

1. Quabbin Maintenance Building, Design and Engineering Services During Construction: The Robinson Green Beretta Corporation, Contract 7677, Amendment 4

V. ADMINISTRATION, FINANCE AND AUDIT

A. Information

1. Update on Climate Mitigation Trust Projects
2. Progress on Emissions Reduction and 2024 Greenhouse Gas Inventory

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Received 6/18/26

Resolution Town of Shutesbury, MA

WHEREAS approximately eighty-eight years ago, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts disincorporated and flooded four towns (Dana, Prescott, Greenwich, and Enfield) in the Swift River Valley so that eastern Massachusetts could grow, aided by sufficient pristine drinking water, and

WHEREAS creation of the Quabbin Reservoir demanded the dismantling of more than 1,100 structures, including upwards of 650 homes; the exhumation of more than 7,600 graves across 34 cemeteries; the stoppage of robust north-south rail service; the scuttling of west-east rail planning; and the shuttering of businesses and industry, and

WHEREAS families who had lived in the Swift River Valley for generations were forced to give up their homes and properties, and

WHEREAS today the 119,940-acre Quabbin Reservoir is protected by Shutesbury and other watershed towns who help to steward an invaluable 412-billion-gallon resource and its watershed habitats, and

WHEREAS Shutesbury works to ensure compliance with state and federal water protection regulations through volunteer and municipally funded positions, and

WHEREAS Shutesbury routinely forgoes economic development opportunities to protect the water quality,

BE IT RESOLVED that Shutesbury and other watershed towns are united in our request for more just recompense for the region's historic sacrifice and our current service we join together seeking:

1. Increased regional representation on the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority Board of Directors and Board of Advisors;
2. Establishment of a Quabbin Community Trust Fund for the purposes of meeting municipal needs such as potable water access and public safety services; and
3. Reconfiguration of the payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) structure to much better recognize the value of Shutesbury and other watershed towns' stewardship of the pristine and world-class Quabbin Reservoir.

Selectboard

Melissa Makepeace O'Neil, Chair

Rita Farrell, Member

Eric A. Stocker, Vice Chair

Date 2-17-26

A TRUE COPY

ATTEST Jeannette C. Kiely
Assistant Town Clerk

Shutesbury Selectboard Meeting Minutes
February 17, 2026 In-Person Meeting Format

Selectboard members present: Eric Stocker/ Vice-Chair, Rita Farrell/ Board Member.
Selectboard members absent: Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil/Chair
Staff present and Guests: Hayley Bolton: Town Administrator, Brennan Mailloux, Frank McGinn, Tom Siefert, Leslie Bracebridge, Police Chief Devon Pelletier, Matteo Pangallo, Steve Soucy, Amanda Alix, Phil Parker, William Smith, Jon Lawless.

Stocker was Chair in Makepeace-O'Neil's absence

Stocker calls the meeting to order at 5:01pm.

Agenda Review: As posted.

Public Comment: No public comments.

General Business:

1. Approve Meeting Minutes for 1.10.26 Four Towns Meeting and 2.03.26:

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes for the 1.10.26 Four Towns Meeting as posted, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, motion carries.
VOTE: Farrell makes a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes for 2.03.26 as posted, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, motion carries.

2. Continuation of the 1/20/26 National Grid Pole Hearing:
    a. The Pole Hearing was started at the 1/20/26 Select Board meeting. At that meeting there were concerns about lack of communication between National Grid and the Conservation Commission, especially with vernal pools in question. For that reason, the Select Board decided not to vote on it at the previous meeting but felt continuing it at a later meeting would provide all parties time to consult with the Conservation Commission and make a better educated decision later.
    b. Matteo Pangallo shared that there was a Request for Determination of Applicability submitted. The Conservation Commission did a site visit and also held a public hearing on it. The Conservation Commission voted to issue the permit with a few minor conditions regarding the work.

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion to approve the Pole Hearing request from National Grid for Pratt Corner Rd as amended, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, motion carries.

3. Police Department Check-In. Devon Pelletier:
   a. Chief Pelletier shared they are still looking for a Full Time Officer. They have received 14 applicants so far, but none have stood out qualifications wise. Most lack policy academy completion. Pelletier stated he is not looking to settle for anyone who is not going to be a good fit for the department, just for the sake of filling the position.
   b. Pelletier shared that all the previous year's police logs have been uploaded to the Town Website. He also shared that the Police Department's website page has been cleaned up. Links have been fixed and you can now submit your license applications online.
   c. Pelletier stated he will be hosting a women's self defense class hopefully in March or April.

4. Discussion on the creation of a Facilities Manager Position:
   a. Boiton presented a cost benefit sheet for the position. The position would be 40 hours a week at $26 an hour, which equates to an annual salary of $54,080. Benefits and Insurance estimated at 30% of the salary would be $16,224. Operational Budget would tack on $3,500 and professional development trainings would be $1,200. Overall, the total personnel request would be $75,004.
   b. The position would be to oversee all town buildings and work under the Town Administrator. The belief is that regular maintenance overseen by a dedicated professional will extend the life of town buildings and save money overtime.
   c. The position is designed to lessen future costs associated with external consultants, emergency repairs, and improved grant yield.
   d. The overall estimated net benefit of adding this position would be $12,500 offset plus grant opportunities.
   e. Leverett currently has this position, and Montague is hiring for a Building Maintenance position currently. Farrell asked if the Leverett Facilities Manager would like to also partner with us.
   f. Frank McGinn shared that the Building's Committee discussed this before and that they are looking for one person that can be in charge of all of the buildings and that can coordinate projects with a vendor list. Frank stated it is important to have a designated individual dedicated towards maintenance. Phil Parker agreed and stated that you need someone with handyman skills and administrative skills.

g. Farrell stated it would be a good idea to add it to the new budget once everything gets straightened out. Perhaps it can go to Special Town Meeting in the Fall.
h. Bolton will follow up on it and look deeper into the specifics of the potential position such as a job description, pay rate, and required qualifications.

5. Vote to disband the Police Chief Search Committee:

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion to disband the Police Chief Search Committee, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, motion carries.

6. Vote to approve the revised Policy No. 010925: Plowing of Private Ways:
   a. Bolton revised the policy to add clarity to it and make it more specific. She wanted there to be less ambiguity in terms of what constitutes decision making.
   b. There was discussion about the need for concrete guidelines on tree heights and access for equipment. The group agreed to keep the issue on their radar.
   c. Farrell stated it is good to have a policy and presented the idea of having a public session encouraging residents to come and hear about what changes there may be to private roads and plowing. This will be added to a future Select Board agenda right after Town Meeting.
   d. Bolton will create a PowerPoint of what the options are.
   e. No vote was taken at this time.

7. Review and sign Resolution for the Town of Shutesbury regarding Quabbin Watershed:
   a. This resolution shares the idea that the town wants compensation, and that the town wants a voice regarding the Quabbin's water being sent to Boston, and the watershed communities not getting equal benefits. The idea is that all 8 towns involved in the watershed will sign these endorsements and work with Senator Comerford.
   b. This will be added to the Town Meeting Warrant as well.

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion to execute the signatures of the Resolution for the Town of Shutesbury regarding the Quabbin Watershed, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye; motion carries.

8. Sign the CAI (Cartographic Associates, Inc.) Tax Map Maintenance Proposal Contract (Assessors Department):

a. The item in discussion was the annual CAI Tax Map Maintenance proposal that was sent to the Assessors for Fiscal Year 27 Real Estate Tax Maps, which will reflect the map changes made in calendar year 2026.

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion to execute the signatures of the CAI Tax Map Maintenance Proposal Contract, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye; motion carries.

9. Town Administrator's Report:
   a. Bolton shared her and Gail Fleischaker attended an AI Foundation Webinar. She stated we have a private Google account, so our information stays local which is good news. That means our account information is not being used for data analysis.
   b. Bolton shared that she has heard back from a couple of contractors regarding the Lake Wyola Dam Repairs. Quotes should be in by next week and then the contractor can be selected. Work should still be completed by the spring.
   c. Bolton stated she is going to communicate to GZA and relevant state offices that the Select Board supports proceeding with emergency dam repairs without conducting additional MEPA testing at this time. She plans to coordinate with Representative Saunders and Joe Comerford for advocacy support.
   d. Bolton shared that we cannot use CPA funds for the Lake Wyola Dam repairs but that we can reach out to the Office of Dam Safety for a grant opportunity to try and mitigate costs. The estimated construction cost is $73,000 dollars.
   e. Bolton shared there will be a Fiscal Summit on Monday, February 23rd at 3 pm at the Shutesbury Library. Zoom will be an option and all committees and boards are invited. They are encouraged to post their meetings if they anticipate having a quorum. Initial budget figures will be presented and there will be brainstorming on cost-saving measures.

10. Meeting Adjourned at 5:52 pm

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:52 pm, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye; motion carries.

Document and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

1. Meeting Minutes draft for 2.03.26
2. Meeting Minutes draft for the 1.10.26 Four Towns Meeting
3. Revised Policy No. 010925 Plowing of Private Ways Draft
4. CAI Tax Map Maintenance Proposal Contract
5. Facilities Manager Cost Benefit Sheet
6. Pole Hearing Packet with information and maps

Respectfully submitted,
Brennan Mailloux
Administrative Assistant
Town Administrator/Select Board

** A full version of the 2/17/26 SB meeting will be available to view on the Town of Shutesbury's YouTube page: https://youtu.be/ZqFychCM5Iw

TOWN OF SHUTESBURY ROADTOWN 1735 JUNE 30 1761

TRUE COPY

ATTEST Jeannette C. Kiely
Assistant Town Clerk

Belchertown
Received 6/26/26

PREAMBLE

Residents from the Quabbin watershed towns, known as the Quabbin Watershed Stewards, and our state legislative delegation are working together seeking ways that will provide more funding and decision-making power for our towns. Now we request a vote of support for the proclamation below that will be sent to the state leadership.

The Quabbin Watershed Stewards would like the residents of Massachusetts to better understand our towns' roles in protecting the Quabbin waters. We continue to develop ways to clarify for residents of our towns, the Quabbin management, as well as residents and businesses in eastern Massachusetts that receive Quabbin's water, the value of the Reservoir and the land surrounding it and our need for funding and control of decisions affecting us.

Proclamation

Recognizing the Historic Sacrifice and Ongoing Stewardship of the Quabbin Reservoir Watershed Communities

WHEREAS, in 1938 the Commonwealth of Massachusetts disincorporated and flooded the towns of Dana, Prescott, Greenwich, and Enfield in the Swift River Valley to enable the creation of the Quabbin Reservoir, ensuring a reliable supply of clean drinking water to support the growth and prosperity of eastern Massachusetts; and

WHEREAS, the creation of the Quabbin Reservoir required the dismantling of more than 1,100 structures, including more than 650 homes; the relocation of more than 7,600 graves from 34 cemeteries; the termination of established north–south rail service and the abandonment of planned east–west rail expansion; and the closure of numerous farms, businesses, and industries that had sustained the Swift River Valley communities; and

WHEREAS, families who had lived in the Swift River Valley for generations were compelled to leave their homes, lands, and livelihoods so that the reservoir could be constructed; and

WHEREAS, today the 119,940-acre Quabbin Reservoir watershed, comprising both publicly and privately held lands, is stewarded by Belchertown and eleven other watershed communities that collectively safeguard a vital 412-billion-gallon drinking water supply; and

WHEREAS, Belchertown and the other watershed towns work diligently to ensure compliance with state and federal water protection regulations in order to preserve the exceptional purity of the Quabbin Reservoir; and

WHEREAS, a significant portion of Belchertown's land was taken for the construction and protection of the Quabbin Reservoir and is therefore no longer available to contribute to the town's economic development and tax base; and

WHEREAS, Belchertown and the other eleven watershed communities continue to play a vital role in protecting the water supply that serves approximately 2.7 million residents of eastern Massachusetts;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Belchertown stands with the other eleven Quabbin watershed communities in respectfully requesting more equitable recognition and recompense for the region's historic sacrifice and its continuing service in protecting the Commonwealth's drinking water supply; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Belchertown and the other watershed communities jointly seek:

1. Increased regional representation on the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority Board of Directors and Board of Advisors;
2. The establishment of a Quabbin Community Trust Fund to assist watershed towns in meeting municipal needs, including potable water access and public safety services; and
3. A reconfiguration of the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) structure to more fully recognize the economic and environmental value provided by Belchertown and the other Quabbin watershed communities through their stewardship of the pristine and world-class Quabbin Reservoir.

Adopted by the Belchertown Select Board this 6th day of April, 2026.

BELCHERTOWN SELECT BOARD

Lesa Lessard Peardon. Chair

Jennifer D Turner, Vice Chair

Nicole Miner, Clerk

Whitney Jorns Kuhnlenz, Member

Jonathan Ritter, Member

Pelham
Received 7/1/26

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT FOR THE 2026 ATM WARRANT

The Pelham Finance Committee is increasingly concerned about the future financial viability of the Town of Pelham. Costs continue to grow well above what our tax revenue can provide. Each year, by law, towns in Massachusetts can only increase taxes 2.5% over the previous year's limit. This annual 2.5% increase only provides $135,000 this year, with some small additional revenue from new growth (new houses, additions, etc). The governor's budget provides an increase of $4,900 in unrestricted aid and $1,600 in PILOT funding.

Budget Increases

In an attempt to hold expenses steady this year in anticipation of further fiscal strain ahead, the Finance Committee requested that all departments fund their budgets at last year's level. Doing so required absorbing their COLAs (2.5%) and step increases by reducing other expenses, and we thank them for their hard work in crunching the numbers. Even with those constraints, the town's fixed costs rose. Group health grew by 8.5%, Hampshire County retirement increased by 8.1%, and workman's compensation by 20%. This totaled $55,383.

Overall spending for schools increased by about 5%. The elementary school's budget increased by a total of $231,280 (8%). This increase would largely be funded by $22,155 in additional tax support from the town (if Article 3B is approved), $65,614 in increased Chapter 70 funds from the state, and an additional $132,445 from the school's accrued school choice revolving account. While that account is currently at a long-term high with a balance of just over $1,000,000, covering similar increases year after year from the revolving account would likely not be sustainable, as the balance can fluctuate significantly. Additionally, the school's capital plan includes over $6.4 million in the next six years for a new roof, HVAC system, and windows. The town's capital stabilization account does not have the funds to pay for these projects, so creative solutions will be required. The town also uses free cash to support tuition for students attending charter schools so that expense doesn't further impact the school's budget. Charter school tuition for two students in the upcoming years is expected to rise to $73,000.

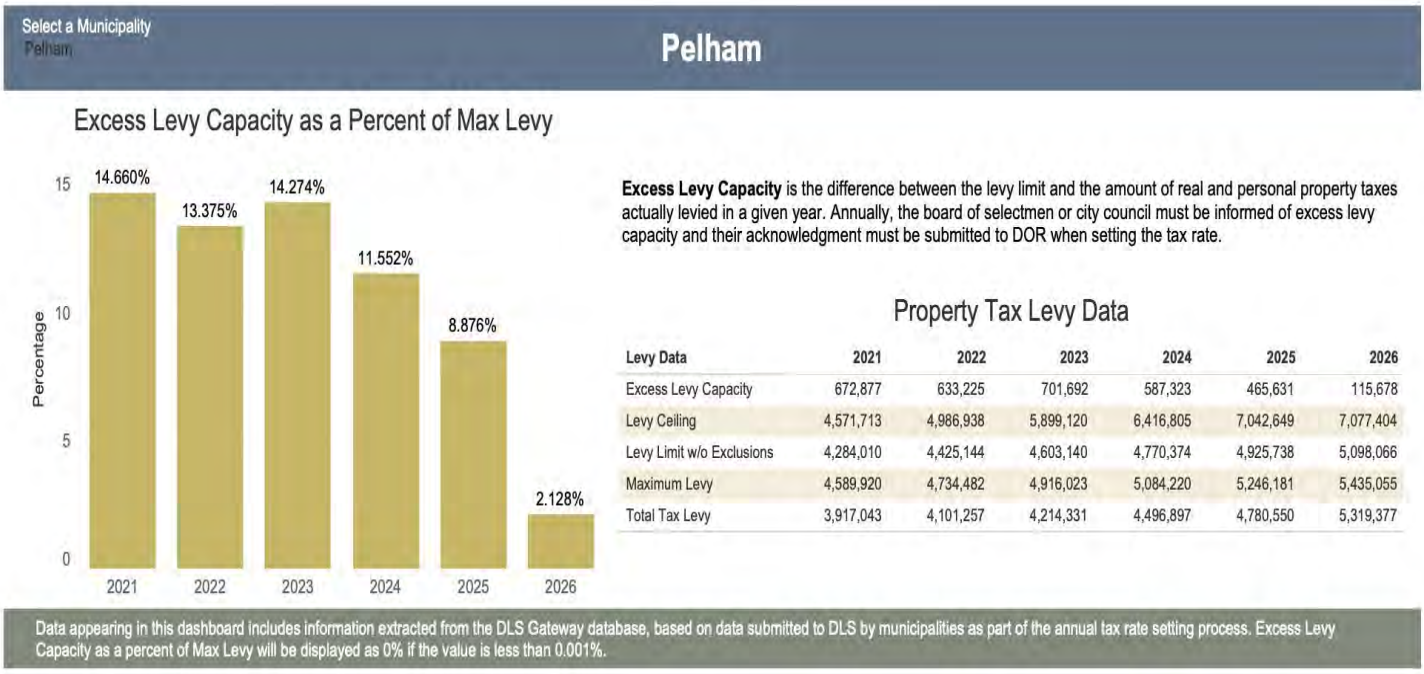
The initial budget presentation for the regional schools (grades 7-12) saw Pelham's assessment for 2027 increase by $213,497. With pushback from the region's four towns, the budget was reduced, and Pelham's assessment has now increased by $101,821 (7.75%). This follows increases in the preceding few years of 4% (FY24), 6% (FY25), and 23% (FY26), which were driven by the region's shift to the statutory method of assessment as well as increased enrollment of Pelham students. The region's capital budget will cost Pelham $407,823 through 2032, which we will likely handle with free cash as we have been doing to fund our annual share of projects. We anticipate that after 2032, the annual amount will jump to over $107,000 per year, well above what free cash can support. Note that the above assessments would have been higher if we had not voted to pay cash for the middle school roof.

Funding the Budget Increases

This year's plan to fund the budget utilizes the available tax increase of $135,000, state aid, and about $18,000 from our excess capacity, reducing that capacity to about $100,000. (If articles 3B and 3C are approved, it would decrease to about $60,000.)

Excess capacity is the available taxing ability left from past years when we did not raise taxes by the full 2.5%. The town needs to keep a decent amount of excess capacity to pay for emergencies, so that at the fall town meeting or a special town meeting money could be appropriated for unanticipated events.

The chart below depicts the town's available excess capacity over time. Because of large increases in the preceding few years, our available excess capacity has fallen steeply; when it is used up, the town will be unable to increase expenditure beyond the automatic 2.5% increase without an override.



Source: https://www.mass.gov/info-details/trends-in-excess-levy-capacity

Looking Ahead

Pelham is entering a fiscal crisis that we have been forecasting for the last couple of years. The Select Board has appointed a committee to identify and study all options for the kindergarten to sixth grade education of Pelham students, and another committee to look for new revenue streams that Pelham might be able to use. Both committees will have reports finished by December 2026.

The reality that is clearly emerging, in the view of the Finance Committee, is that Pelham does not have the tax base to fund the current and growing requirements for the Town. We would need new growth or increased assessments of $4,000,000 each year for every $100,000 in increased spending.

$4,000,000 x 2.5% = $100,000

In reality, the average of Pelham's new growth per year over the last four years was $2,461,164. Because of increased assessments and new growth during 2021-2025 that coincided with overall trends in housing values post-COVID, we had the excess capacity available to fully fund the town government, including both schools; however, with large tax increases in the last few years, our excess capacity has diminished quickly.

Pelham is rapidly approaching a major crossroads that will determine its future. Over the next year, we all need to come to terms with this fiscal reality that the town is facing. The two committees that the Select Board has appointed will be doing a great deal of research and it is important that they be given the freedom to do it well. The Finance Committee will begin the preparation of a necessary override proposal for next year's Town Meeting, and discussions will likely center around some short term and longer term recommendations. To communicate with the Finance Committee, you can email finance@pelhamma.gov. We welcome your input.

Respectfully submitted by John Trickey, Cara Castenson, Emily Marriott, and David Keiser

Results
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
May 9, 2026

The annual Town Meeting was called to order by Moderator, Dan Robb, at 9:02 a.m. at the grounds of the Pelham Elementary School.

Article 1.
Voted unanimously to accept the reports of the Town Officers and Committees, or take any other action relative thereto.

Article 2.
Voted unanimously to authorize the Town Treasurer, with the approval of the Select Board, to borrow money from time to time in anticipation of the revenue of the FY2027 beginning July 1, 2026, in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 4, and to issue a note or notes as may be given for a period of less than one year in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 17, or take any other action relative thereto.

Article 3.
Voted unanimously to raise and appropriate, and/or transfer from available funds a sum of money necessary to defray the expenses of the Town for the ensuing fiscal year, or take any other action relative thereto.

		FY 2025	FY 2026	FY27	FY27
	Article 3	**Appropriated**	**Appropriated**	**Requested**	**Recommended**
	GENERAL GOVERNMENT				
2	Selectperson Salary	$3,600	$3,600	$3,600	$3,600
	Expenses				

3	Town Clerk Salary	$32,490	$34,554	$45,574	$45,574
	Assistant Town Clerk		$6,000	$6,000	$6,000
	Expenses	8,000	$9,000	$7,125	$7,125
4	Finance Committee	$990	$990	$990	$990
5	Assessor's Salary	$2000	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000
	Assistant Assessors Salary	$12,300	$12,300	$12,300	$12,300
	Clerical/Consulting	$1,000	$1,000	$1,000	$1,000
	Contract Service	$13,900	$17,500	$17,500	$17,500
	Expenses	$2,850	$2,850	$2,850	$2,850
6	Collector Salary	$20,768	$25,247.00	$0	$0
	Expenses	$11,275.00	$11,275	$0	$0
	Collector Salary & Expenses			$36,522	$36,522
7	Treasurer Salary	$32,145	$33,449	$0	$0
	Expenses	$9,756	$10,000	$0	$0
	Clerical/Consulting	$7,019	$7,184	$0	$0
	Treasurer Salary & Expenses			$57,984	$57,984
8	Legal Services	$15,000	$15,000	$15,000	$15,000
9	Town Meetings, Elections etc.	$15,000	$9,000	$9,000	$9,000
10	Town Reports	$875	$875	$400	$400
11	Town Office Wages	$31,214	$31,994	$39,936	$39,936
	Select Board/Town Office Expenses	$21,500	$21,500	$21,000	$21,000
12	Buildings and Grounds				
	Salaries	$18,630	$19,096	$19,573	$19,573
	Expenses	$65,720	$65,720	$65,720	$65,720
	Maintenance	$52,000	$52,000	$51,523	$51,523
13	Blanket Insurance	$48,000	$52,800	$50,280	$50,280
14	Town Accountant	$10,500	$10,500	$13,725	$13,725
	Town Accountant Expense	$250	$250	$250	$250
15	Reserve Fund	$102,000	$102,000	$102,000	$102,000
16	Surety Bonds	$1,000	$1,000	$600	$600
	Group Buying with FRCOG	$3,250	$3,415	$3,585	$3,585
17	Emergency Management	$7,000	$7,000	$7,000	$7,000
18	Archivist	$0	$0		
TOTAL GENERAL GOVERNMENT		**$549,757**	**$565,639**	**$593,037**	**$593,037**
BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS					
20	Board of Appeals	$200	$200	$200	$200
21	Conservation Commission	$850	$850	$850	$850
	Part Time Conservation Agent	$12,500	$12,500	$12,500	$12,500
22	Council on Aging	$5,000	$5,000	$5,000	$5,000
23	Historical Commission	$200	$200	$200	$200
24	Library Trustees				
	Director Salary	$41,236	$42,267	$43,712	$43,712

	Staff Salaries	$20,239	$22,739	$22,808	$22,808
	Expenses	$5,000	$5,000	$3,865	$3,865
25	Planning Board	$1,500	$1,500	$1,500	$1,500
	Clerical/consulting	$10,000	$13,000	$13,000	$13,000
26	Recreation Commission	$0	$0	$0	$0
28	Cemetery Commission	$8,000	$8,000	$8,000	$8,000
	Energy Committee	$500	$500	$500	$500
TOTAL BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS		**$105,225**	**$111,756**	**$112,135**	**$112,135**
SCHOOLS					
PUBLIC WORKS					
40	Highway Fund				
	Superintendent Salary	$82,958	$85,032	$83,830	$83,830
	Staff Salaries	$179,140	$187,229	$157,103	$157,103
	Expenses	$111,362	$111,362	$141,362	$141,362
41	School Signal Lights	$1,100	$1,100	$1,100	$1,100
42	Snow Removal				
	Salaries	$17,790	$18,235	$18,235	$18,235
	Materials	$81,875	$81,875	$81,875	$81,875
TOTAL PUBLIC WORKS		**$474,225**	**$484,833**	**$483,505**	**$483,505**
PROTECTION OF PERSONS AND PROPERTY					
50	Police Department				
	Chief Salary	$32,752	$33,571	$34,410	$34,410
	Full Time Officer Salary	$156,603	$171,239	$183,636	$183,636
	Part Time Officer's Salaries	$21,000	$25,000	$11,607	$11,607
	Training and Education	$11,255	$16,255	$16,255	$16,255
	Expenses	$25,701	$35,701	$28,201	$28,201
	Expenses Fuel	$10,475	$10,475	$10,475	$10,475
	Reserve Officers	$0	$0	$0	$0
	Regional Lockup	$0	$0	$0	$0
50A	Town Road Detail	$3,729	$3,729	$3,729	$3,729
50C	Constable: Elections	$2,275	$2,275	$2,275	$2,275
51	Fire Department				
	Chief Salary	$33,960	$34,809	$40,407	$40,407
	Firefighter's Salaries	$43,358	$44,442	$45,583	$45,583
	Administration Assistant	$6,500	$6,663	$6,829	$6,829
	Expenses	$26,378	$26,378	$24,084	$24,084
53	Fire Hydrants	$280	$280	$280	$280
	Fire Equipment Testing	$5,000	$5,000	$5,000	$5,000
54	Tree Warden Salary	$1,500	$1,500	$1,500	$1,500

	Expenses	$11,500	$11,500	$11,500	$11,500
57	Ambulance	$35,861	$37,654	$39,160	$39,160
58	Animal Control	$3,000	$3,000	$3,000	$3,000
TOTAL PUBLIC SAFETY		**$431,127**	**$469,471**	**$467,931**	**$467,931**
HEALTH AND SANITATION					
60	Board of Health Salaries	$0	$0	$0	$0
	Expenses	$400	$400	$400	$400
	Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control	$0	$0	$0	$0
61	Solid Waste				
	Hazardous Household Waste	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000
	Recycling	$0	$0	$0	$0
63	Inspector of Animals	$75	$75	$75	$75
65	Quabbin Health District	$20,361	$21,180	$21,180	$21,180
TOTAL HEALTH AND SANITATION		**$22,836**	**$23,655**	**$23,655**	**$23,655**
BENEFITS AND INSURANCE					
70	County Retirement	$336,102	$334,741	$361,752	$361,752
71	Veteran's Agent Salary	$6,494	$6,652	$7,072	$7,072
	Expenses				
	Benefits	$49,248	$49,248	$49,248	$49,248
72	Workers' Compensation	$30,000	$30,000	$36,000	$36,000
73	Unemployment Insurance	$6,000	$6,000	$6,000	$6,000
74	Group Health /Medicare	$224,000	$258,048	$280,000	$280,000
	Health Insurance Opt Out	$9,000	$9,000	$9,000	$9,000
75	OPEB Deposit	$220,000	$240,000	$220,000	$220,000
TOTAL BENEFITS AND INSURANCE		**$880,844**	**$933,689**	**$969,072**	**$969,072**
GRAND TOTAL		**$2,464,014.00**	**$2,595,378.00**	**$2,649,335**	**$2,649,335**

Recommended by the Finance Committee & Select Board.

Article 3A.

Voted to amend FY 2027 requested Colum for line #31 to 1,420,360.00 passed with a majority vote with 5 no's to see if the Town will raise and appropriate the following monies to fund the Pelham Elementary School and Pelham's assessment from the Amherst Pelham Regional School for Fiscal Year 2027, or take any other action relative thereto.

		FY 2025	**FY 2026**	**FY 2027**	**FY 2027**
		Appropriated	**Appropriated**	**Requested**	**Recommended**
30	Pelham Elementary	$2,010,231	$2,096,679	$2,184,844	$2,162,293
31	Amherst Pelham Regional	$1,065,695	$1,310,503	$1,420,360	$1,412,324
	TOTAL SCHOOLS	$3,075,926	$3,407,182	$3,597,168	$3,574,617

Recommended by the Finance Committee & Select Board.

Article 3B.

Vote Passed by mjority to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of $22,551 to be added to the Pelham Elementary School budget for Fiscal Year 2027, or take any other action thereto.

Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 3C.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the following sums to be added to the following expense accounts to bring those departments to a level services budget as compared to 2026, or take any other action relative thereto:

Police Department Part-time/overtime/admin	$10,393
Library Expenses	$1,135
Town Clerk Expenses	$1,894
Fire Department Expenses	$2,294
Building and Grounds Maintenance	$478
Tax Collector Expense	$691
Treasurer Expense	$2,028

Total: $18,913
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 3D.
To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of $274,958 from Free Cash to pay for the following expenses in Fiscal Year 2027, or take any other action relative thereto:

Sustainability Committee	$500
Cemetery Commission	$1,000
Historical Complex	$1,000
Zoning Board of Appeals	$500
Records Preservation	$500
Regional Capital Reserve	$50,000
Regional Capital Cost for 2027	$29,275
Fix or Replace a Door at the Elementary School	$12,000
Tree Removal Including the Tree at the School	$7,000
Medicare Reimbursement to the School	$7,183
Cost of a Charter School Student	$35,000
Legal Expense	$15,000
Boiler Repairs at the Community Center	$10,000
Sprinkler Maintenance at the Community Center	$7,500
Maintenance of the Community Center	$2,500
Police Signing Bonus	$2,500
Reimbursable Fire Department Grants	$13,500
Road Maintenance	$25,000
OPEB Review and Assessment	$5,000
Treasurer/Collector Transition Costs	$50,000

Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 4.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will name the salaries and wages for all elected officers for the ensuing year, which payments shall not be made in advance of performance, and to determine when and how they shall be paid, or take any other action relative thereto.

		FY2025 Appropriated	**FY2026 Appropriated**	**FY2027 Recommended**
Assessors	(Chair)	$1,000	$1,000	$1,000
Assessors	(others)	$500	$500	$500

Auditor			$0	$0	$0
Board of Health	(Chair)		$200	$0	$0
Board of Health	(others)		$150	$0	$0
Cemetery Commissioner	(each 3)	$9.00hr	$0	$0	$0
Library Trustees			$0	$0	$0
Moderator			$0	$0	$0
Planning Board			$0	$0	$0
School Committee			$0	$0	$0
Select Board	(each 3)		$1,200	$1,200	$1,200
Tree Warden			$1,500	$1,500	$1,500

Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 5.
Voted unanimously to see whether the Town will vote to amend the Agreement Establishing A Regional School District Comprising the Towns of Amherst, Pelham, Leverett, and Shutesbury to revise paragraph (g) of Section VI, Apportionment and Payment of Costs Incurred by the District, as follows:
The Regional School Committee is authorized, if it so votes, to execute a lease, or leases, consistent with the powers and duties of the Regional School Committee as specified in M.G.L. c.71, section 16,
or otherwise act theron.
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 6.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to appropriate from the Capital Plan Stabilization Fund the sum of $100,000 to make needed repairs to the exterior of the Community Center, or take any other action relative thereto.
Recommended by the Finance Committee and Select Board.

Article 7.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to appropriate from the Capital Plan Equipment Stabilization Fund the sum of $150,000 to purchase new Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) and accessories to replace the Fire Department's expired units, or take any other action relative thereto.
Recommended by the Finance Committee and Select Board.

Article 8.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to approve annual spending limits for FY2027 for revolving funds established in the Town Bylaws, in accordance with G.L c.44, Section 53E1/2, with such expenditure limits to be applicable for each fiscal year until such time as Town Meeting votes, prior to July 1 in any year, to increase the same for the ensuing fiscal year; provided, however, that at the request of the entity authorized to expend such funds, the Select Board, with the approval of the Finance Committee, may increase such limit, for that fiscal year only, all as set forth below, or take any other action relative thereto:

Revolving fund	FY spending limit
Archivist	$2,500
Building Inspector	$30,000
Community Garden Committee	$5,000
Community Hall	$7,000
Fire Department	$7,500
Gas Inspector	$1,500
Department of Public Works	$7,500
Planning Board	$15,000
Plumbing Inspector	$1,500

Police Department	$7,500
Wiring Inspector	$3,000
Zoning Board of Appeals	$1,000

Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 9.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to amend the Town Bylaws to establish a Board of Health Title 5 Inspection Revolving Fund pursuant to G.L c.44, §53E½ by (1) amending § 85-3, List of authorized funds, by adding the following row in its alphabetical order:

Board of Health Title 5	Health Agent	Title 5 Inspection Fees and Fines	Inspections, supplies, and required professional courses

and (2) by amending § 85-4, Spending limits, by adding the following row in its alphabetical order:

Board of Health Title 5	$5,000

or take any other action relative thereto.
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 10.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to amend the Town Bylaws to establish a Council on Aging Revolving Fund
pursuant to G.L c.44, §53E½ by (1) amending § 85-3, List of authorized funds, by adding the following row in its alphabetical order:

Council on Aging Revolving Fund	Council on Aging	Council on Aging programming receipts	Programming operational and administrative costs

and (2) by amending § 85-4, Spending limits, by adding the following row in its alphabetical order:

Council on Aging Revolving Fund	$4,000

or take any other action relative thereto.
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 11.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of $20,000 from the PEG Access and Cable Related Fund (established by vote of the Fall 2015 Town Meeting) pursuant to G.L. c.44, §53F3/4 to be used by the Select Board for the purpose of technology services and purchases for the Town, or take any other action relative thereto.
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 12.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to adopt the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee to appropriate and transfer the sum of $10,250 from the Community Preservation Fund Fiscal Year 2027 Estimated Annual Revenues for administrative expenses in Fiscal Year 2027, or take any other action relative thereto.
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 13.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to adopt the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee to appropriate and transfer the following sums of money from the Community Preservation Fund Fiscal Year 2027 Estimated Annual Revenues, and to reserve for later appropriation: (1) $20,500.00 for Open Space and Recreation, (2) $20,500.00 for Community Housing, and (3) $20,500.00 for Historic Resources; and to

reserve from the Fiscal Year 2027 Estimated Annual Revenues, for later appropriation, $133,250.00 to the Fiscal Year 2027 Community Preservation Fund Budgeted Reserve, or take any other action relative thereto.
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 14.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to adopt the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee to appropriate and transfer the sum of $30,000, of which (1) $19,757.87 shall be from Pelham's Fiscal Year 2026 Community Preservation Fund Budgeted Reserve and (2) $10,242.13 shall be from the Open Space and Recreation Fund, for the Pelham Conservation Commission's application for funding to restore the weathered stairs and bridge leading to Buffam Falls from North Valley Road, or take any other action relative thereto.
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 15.
Vote passed by majority with 11 no's to see if the Town will vote to adopt the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee to appropriate and transfer the sum of $10,000 from the Open Space and Recreation Fund, for the Pelham Conservation Commission's application for funding for creation of digital trail maps for the Town of Pelham, which shall be available via the Town's website and downloadable as digital files that can be used in phone-based mapping applications, or take any other action relative thereto.
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 16.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to authorize the Library Trustees to expend such monies as they may receive from the sale of discarded books, gifts, and bequests, and from the State and Federal Governments, or take any other action relative thereto.
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 17.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to authorize the Pelham Cultural Council to expend such monies as it may receive from the State and Federal Governments, and from gifts and bequests, or take any other action relative thereto.
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 18.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to enter into contracts with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation for construction and/or maintenance of public highways for Fiscal Year 2027, and further to authorize the Select Board on behalf of the Town to accept and expend any money from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for highway construction and/or maintenance, provided that no funds shall be expended to widen, or enter into a contract to widen, any Town road unless the Select Board has held a public hearing advertised at least fourteen (14) days in advance, with any proposed contract and/or plans for such road improvements being posted for public viewing prior to the public hearing, and further provided that such policy is consistent with State requirements, or take any other action relative thereto.
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 19.
Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to accept and/or apply for any State or Federal funds or grants that may become available during Fiscal Year 2027, and to expend such funds in accordance with the terms and conditions thereof, provided that no funds shall be expended to widen, or to enter into a contract to widen, any Town road unless the Select Board has held a public hearing advertised at least fourteen (14) days in advance, with any proposed contract and/or plans for such road improvements being posted for public viewing prior to the public hearing, and further provided that such policy is consistent with State requirements, or take any other action relative thereto.
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 20.

Voted unanimously to see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to acquire by gift for municipal purposes, on such terms and conditions and subject to such restrictions as the Select Board shall deem appropriate, a parcel of land, known as Parcel B, Cadwell Street in the Town of Pelham, to be conveyed by Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity, Inc., and more particularly described as follows:

> The land shown as Parcel B on the ANR Plan titled, "Subdivision Approval Not Required Plan of Land in Pelham, Massachusetts, Prepared for Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity, Inc.," prepared by Harold L. Eaton and Associates, Inc., dated January 15, 2026, and recorded with the Hampshire Registry of Deeds in Plan Book 259, Page 67, having approximately 1,455 square feet according to said plan.

and authorize the Select Board to sign any and all documents in order to carry out the purposes of this article, or take any other action relative thereto.
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 21.
Voted unanimously for resolution Supporting the Quabbin Watershed and Regional Equity Act (S.546 H.1042)

To see if the Town will vote to support legislation currently pending before the Massachusetts Legislature, including S.546 and H.1042, "An Act Relative to the Quabbin Watershed and Regional Equity," which would establish a partnership program providing approximately $35 million annually to sup-port the municipalities that host and protect the Quabbin Reservoir watershed; and

Whereas the Quabbin Reservoir was created by the Commonwealth pursuant to Chapter 375 of the Acts of 1926, which required the disincorporation of the towns of Dana, Prescott, Greenwich, and Enfield and permanently altered the economic future of the surrounding watershed communities; and

Whereas the municipalities surrounding the Quabbin Reservoir continue to steward and protect a critical drinking water supply serving approximately three million residents through the system operated by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, and

Whereas the Quabbin Reservoir is one of the largest and most important public drinking water supplies in the United States, providing approximately 200 million gallons of clean drinking water each day, serving as a foundational component of the Commonwealth's public health, economic stability, and climate resilience.

Whereas the Town of Pelham supports a fair partnership between the communities that protect the Commonwealth's drinking water supply and the millions of residents who rely upon it; and

Whereas the Town of Pelham values its role as a regionally important water supply protection area not only for the Quabbin but also as watershed for wells and water supply in Pelham, Amherst, Shutesbury, Belchertown, and Springfield; and

Whereas the partnership funding proposed in S.546 and H.1042 would help align the Commonwealth's modern water system with the historic responsibilities established when the Quabbin Reservoir project was authorized in 1926;

Whereas watershed protection requirements and the Commonwealth's ownership of large areas of land have limited some economic development opportunities for Quabbin watershed municipalities, **while safeguarding land, air quality, soil, forest land, and habitat values for the citizens of the entire** Commonwealth,

Be it resolved that the Town of Pelham respectfully urges the Massachusetts Legislature to enact S.546 and H.1042 and establish a fair and equitable partnership with the municipalities that host and protect the Quabbin Reservoir watershed.

Be it further resolved that the Town supports continued collaboration between the Commonwealth, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, and the Quabbin watershed communities to advance policies that strengthen this partnership, including but not limited to:

- representation of watershed communities in MWRA governance
- investment in watershed infrastructure and water quality protection
- technical and engineering assistance for watershed municipalities
- equitable drought management policies across the Quabbin water system

And further to authorize the Select Board to transmit this vote to the Governor, the Massachusetts Legislature, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, and the municipalities served by the MWRA.
Recommended by the Select Board.

Article 22.

Citizen's Petition

Temporary Moratorium on New Single-Family Construction on Certain Vacant Lots in the Village Center Districts

Summary/Purpose:

To provide the Town time to review and clarify zoning provisions affecting neighborhood scale, site density, and dimensional standards for new single-family dwellings on vacant lots within the Village Center Districts.

To see if the Town will vote, pursuant to the authority granted under the Massachusetts Zoning Act (M.G.L. Chapter 40A), to impose a temporary moratorium on the issuance of building permits for new single-family dwellings on currently vacant lots greater than 10,000 square feet within the Village Center Zoning Districts while the Town studies and considers amendments to the Zoning Bylaw governing neighborhood scale, site density, building massing and dimensional standards within those districts, said moratorium to remain in effect for one (1) year from the effective date of this vote or until the adoption of such amendments, whichever occurs first;

During the period of the moratorium, the Pelham Planning Board shall review the relevant provisions of the Zoning Bylaw and may prepare and recommend amendments for consideration by a subsequent Town meeting in order to clarify dimensional standards and site density expectations and to ensure that new development within the Village Center Districts are consistent with the intent and purposes of the Town's zoning regulations; This moratorium shall not apply to:

1. Renovation, alteration, or expansion of existing structures;
2. Construction authorized by a building permit issued prior to the effective date of this vote; or
3. Projects that have received all required zoning approvals prior to the effective date of this vote or take any other action relative thereto.

Voted unanimously to amend article 22 to see if the town will vote to direct the Pelham Planning Board to study and consider amendments to the Zoning Bylaws governing neighborhood scale, site density, building massing, and dimensional standards within the Village Center Zoning Districts, in addition to any other relevant zoning issues the Planning Board deems important with respect to the Village Center Districts; and further, that the Pelham Planning Board shall review the relevant provisions of the Zoning Bylaws and may prepare and recommend amendments for consideration by a subsequent Town Meeting in order to clarify dimensional standards and site density expectations and to ensure that new development within the Village Center Districts is consistent with the intent and purposes of the Town's zoning regulations.

The business of the warrant having been completed, the meeting Voted to dissolve at 1:26 p.m. on Saturday, May 9, 2026.

129 voters were checked in.

Attest:
Melissa A. Hibbard
Town Clerk

Select Board Meeting Minutes
4/7/2026, 7pm via ZOOM

Present: Select Board members Jessica Barr, Robert Agoglia, and Tara Loomis, Executive Assistant Susannah Martin, Ann Hondrogen, John Hondrogen, Planning Board Chair Judith Eiseman, Jennie Bergeron, Matt Wolaver, Timothy Pachirat, Board of Assessors Chair Robert Rowell, Vera Bruursema, Pelham Police Sergeant Sean Connor, Brittnay Mallonga, Greeymini 2020, Mark Goodhind.

Open: Select Board Chair Agoglia called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.
Minutes: 3/16/26 tabled until next meeting.

Appointment to Pelham Futures Committee
Motion to appoint Dr. Xiomara Herman or her designee to the Pelham Elementary Futures Committee as an Advisory member, aye Robert Agoglia, aye Jessica Barr, aye Tara Loomis, unanimously approved.

Police Department Computers
Quote from Tech 1 Computers to replace the four desktop computers with accessories that are old and no longer being updated security wise through Microsoft. There are currently enough funds in the cable franchise account to cover this purchase. The Select Board would like to try to plan a 3-4 year replacement for all departments to get on a regular rotation. The computers are for the Chief's office, main office, Sergeant's office, and booking room.

Additional Articles ATM Warrant
CPC; admin expenses, transfer funds, Con Comm stairs project, digital trail maps. Motion to include ~~on~~ the four community preservation committee articles for admin expenses, transfer funds, Con Comm stairs project, and digital trail maps on the annual town meeting warrant, aye Robert Agoglia, aye Jessica Barr, aye Tara Loomis, unanimously approved.
School; lease, statutory method. Motion to include the two school articles for lease, and statutory method on the annual town meeting warrant, aye Robert Agoglia, aye Jessica Barr, aye Tara Loomis, unanimously approved.
Quabbin Resolution; Motion to include the quabbin resolution on the annual town meeting warrant, aye Robert Agoglia, aye Jessica Barr, aye Tara Loomis, unanimously approved.

No Early Voting for ATE

Motion to not have early voting for the 2026 annual town election, aye Robert Agoglia, aye Jessica Barr, aye Tara Loomis, unanimously approved.

Review Charge for Town Revenue Committee-tabled.

Review Email regarding Habitat Houses on Cadwell
Letter received from John Hondrogen regarding Habitat houses that will be built on Cadwell Street. Members of the public offered comments related to housing scale, bylaws, neighborhood character, neighborhood input, and building moratorium.
Planning Board is putting together a committee this summer to study the Village Center and priorities.

Town Officials
Cable Advisory Committee discovered potential option for Pelham to have an access cable channel for broadcasting to Comcast subscribers. More information needed related to cost and maintenance of channel.
Planning Board reviewing Pure Sky's application/requests for installation of a large scale solar array in the Cadwell Forest. The State's enforcement of new regulations will be coming in October 2026. The Planning Board will need to determine if the town bylaws supercede the state mandated regulations. The Planning Board will also be discussing the ADU bylaw comments from town counsel.

Liaison Reports
Town Offices; Audit began today.
Fire Department; Burn season currently.

Old Business-none.
Time Reserved for Topics Unanticipated-none.

Adjournment
Motion to adjourn at 8:24pm, aye Robert Agoglia, aye Jessica Barr, aye Tara Loomis, unanimously approved.

Next Meeting-Tuesday, April 21, 2026, 7:00pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Susannah Martin

Received 7/2/26

TOWN OF ORANGE

TOWN CLERK

6 Prospect Street, Orange, MA 01364

Phone – 978-544-1100 ext. 112

townclerk@townoforange.org

www.townoforange.org

May 12, 2026

Pursuant to warrant duly served and posted, the inhabitants of the Town of Orange qualified to vote in elections and town affairs at the Annual Town Meeting held at the Ruth B. Smith Auditorium on May 11, 2025, at 7:30 p.m. passed the following article:

ARTICLE 24: RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF QUABBIN WATERSHED REGIONAL EQUITY

To see if the Town will vote to approve the following resolution, as contained in Addendum 1 of the warrant and available prior to Town Meeting at the Board of Selectmen's office, expressing the Town's support for regional equity for Quabbin watershed communities, including improved representation, establishment of a community trust fund, and reform of the Commonwealth's Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) program as it relates to protected Quabbin watershed lands; or take any other action relative thereto.

Resolution in Support of Quabbin Watershed Regional Equity

WHEREAS approximately eighty-eight years ago, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts disincorporated and flooded four towns (Dana, Prescott, Greenwich, and Enfield) in the Swift River Valley so that eastern Massachusetts could grow, aided by sufficient pristine drinking water, and

WHEREAS creation of the Quabbin Reservoir demanded the dismantling of more than 1,100 structures, including upwards of 650 homes; the exhumation of more than 7,600 graves across 34 cemeteries; the stoppage of robust north-south rail service; the scuttling of west-east rail planning; and the shuttering of businesses and industry, and

WHEREAS families who had lived in the Swift River Valley for generations were forced to give up their homes and properties, and

WHEREAS today the 119,940-acre Quabbin Reservoir is protected by Orange and other watershed towns who help to steward an invaluable 412-billion-gallon resource and its watershed habitats, and

WHEREAS Orange works to ensure compliance with state and federal water protection regulations through volunteer and municipally funded positions, and

WHEREAS Orange routinely forgoes economic development opportunities to protect the water quality,

BE IT RESOLVED that Orange and other watershed towns are united in our request for more just recompense for the region's historic sacrifice and our current service we join together seeking:

1. Increased regional representation on the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority Board of Directors and Board of Advisors;
2. Establishment of a Quabbin Community Trust Fund for the purposes of meeting municipal needs such as potable water access and public safety services; and
3. Reconfiguration of the payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) structure to much better recognize the value of Orange and other watershed towns' stewardship of the pristine and world-class Quabbin Reservoir.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this Resolution shall be transmitted to the Governor, the Massachusetts Legislature, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, and relevant regional and watershed advocacy organizations.

Motion passed. 73 in favor, 3 opposed, 2 abstained.

A true record of the vote.
ATTEST:

Rachael Fortier, CMC
Town Clerk

Received 7/1/26

TOWN OF HARDWICK

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

JUNE 6, 2026

CERTIFICATE OF VOTE

ARTICLE #26

Voted unanimously for the Town to support legislation currently pending before the Massachusetts Legislature, including S. 546 and H. 1042, "An Act Relative to the Quabbin Watershed and Regional Equity," which would establish a partnership program providing approximately $35 million annually to support the municipalities that host and protect the Quabbin Reservoir watershed; and

Whereas the Quabbin Reservoir was created by the Commonwealth pursuant to Chapter 375 of the Acts of 1926, which required the disincorporation of the towns of Dana, Prescott, Greenwich, and Enfield and permanently altered the economic future of the surrounding watershed communities; and

Whereas the municipalities surrounding the Quabbin Reservoir continue to steward and protect a critical drinking water supply serving approximately three million residents through the system operated by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority; and

Whereas the Quabbin Reservoir is one of the largest and most important public drinking water supplies in the United States, providing approximately 200 million gallons of clean drinking water each day and supporting the economic vitality of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; and

Whereas the Town of Hardwick supports a fair partnership between the communities that protect the Commonwealth's drinking water supply and the millions of residents who rely upon it; and

Whereas the partnership funding proposed in S.546 and H.1042 would help align the Commonwealth's modern water system with the historic responsibilities established when the Quabbin Reservoir project was authorized in 1926;

Now therefore be it resolved that the Town of Hardwick respectfully urges the Massachusetts Legislature to enact S.546 and H.1042 and establish a fair and equitable partnership with the municipalities that host and protect the Quabbin Reservoir watershed.

Be it further resolved that the Town supports continued collaboration between the Commonwealth, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA), and the Quabbin watershed communities to advance policies that strengthen this partnership, including but not limited to:

- **representation of watershed communities in MWRA governance**
- **investment in watershed infrastructure and water quality protection**
- **technical and engineering assistance for watershed municipalities**
- **equitable drought management policies across the Quabbin water system**

And further to authorize the Select Board to transmit this vote to the Governor, the Massachusetts Legislature, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, and the municipalities served by the MWRA.

A TRUE COPY. ATTEST at HARDWICK, MASSACHUSETTS.

RYAN J. WITKOS, CMMC
TOWN CLERK

Received 7/7/26

TEL. 413-967-9648 EXT. 103

TOWN OF WARE, MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK
126 MAIN STREET, STE. F, WARE, MASSACHUSETTS 01082

NANCY J. TALBOT
TOWN CLERK

CERTIFIED COPY OF VOTE

At a legal meeting of the qualified voters of the Town of Ware, held on Monday – June 8, 2026, action as follows was taken under:

ARTICLE 33. Passed in favor with a vote of One Hundred Four (104) yes and Zero (0) no that the Town support the resolution requesting additional funding and representation for the Quabbin Region by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority and authorize the Selectboard to sign and submit the resolution to the State Legislature.

A true copy attest: Nancy J. Talbot
Nancy J. Talbot – Town Clerk of Ware

June 11, 2026

Received 6/30/26

Town of Barre
Office of the Select Board
40 West Street
Barre, Massachusetts 01005-0697
Telephone: 978-355-2504 · Fax: 978-355-5023

June 23, 2026

RE: Stewardship of Quabbin Reservoir

Dear Governor Healey, Massachusetts Legislators and MWRA,

On behalf of the citizens of Barre, one of the 12 towns stewarding Metropolitan Boston's water supply, we are seeking:

Financial support for our local boards and departments who manage legal and physical aspects of our forests, streams and roads with limited personnel, training and safety equipment;

Increased representation of the 12 watershed communities in MWRA governance at all levels;

Investment in watershed infrastructure, water quality/quantity protection and waste management in our region;

Technical and engineering assistance for local water and waste management problems;

Equitable drought management policies across the Quabbin water system;

Increased representation of watershed communities on EOEEA/DCR management of watershed land.

The Town of Barre's Selectboard supports the following legislation:

1. "An Act Relative to the Quabbin Watershed and Regional Equity" (Senate 546 and House 1042) which would establish a partnership program providing approximately $35Million annually to establish a "fair and equitable partnership between the MWRA and the municipalities that host and protect the Quabbin Reservoir watershed."
2. Reconfiguration of the payment in lieu of taxes, PILOT, structure to better recognize the value of Barre's stewardship of the Quabbin Reservoir.

Barre is a small, rural town with a responsibility to guard the state's largest and most successful water supply. With its limited tax base, Barre struggles to provide quality water to its own residents while the MWRA profits from our stewardship.

We thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Barre's Selectboard

Dr. Maureen Marshall, Chair

Mark Regienus, Vice-chair

Richard Stevens, Clerk

Received 6/26/26

TOWN OF ATHOL

Office of the Town Manager

Shaun A. Suhoski, *Town Manager*
Email: ssuhoski@townofathol.org

Bridget A. Armentrout, *Executive Assistant*
Email: barmentrout@townofathol.org

June 26, 2026

Massachusetts Water Resources Authority

Secretary Rebecca Tepper, MWRA Board Chair
Secretary.Tepper@mass.gov

Kristin MacDougall, Assistant Secretary to the MWRA Board of Directors
Kristin.MacDougall@mwra.com

MWRA Advisory Board
mwra.ab@mwraadvisoryboard.com

RE: MWRA Board Meeting July 10 – Quabbin Watershed Communities

Dear Secretary Tepper and Members of the Board,

The town of Athol wishes to be heard during the Board meeting on July 10 as part of the discussion on the Quabbin Watershed communities and the impacts the formation and operation of the reservoir have had on the region.

Athol is recognized as the hub of the North Quabbin region of the Commonwealth. And, while the physical watershed includes a relatively small portion of south Athol within its bounds, the flooding of the lost towns of Dana, Enfield, Prescott and Greenwich resulted in the dismantling and closure of the Athol & Enfield Railroad (more fondly known as the Rabbit Line or Rabbit Run) in 1935. The railroad served as an economic lifeline for over 60 years until the reservoir effectively cut Athol off from points south to Springfield and Palmer.

Today, Athol supports the efforts for fair recompense to each of the communities that still safeguard the primary source of drinking water to over 3.1 million consumers of the MWRA. The importance of the watershed communities to protect metro Boston's primary reservoir, holding over 344 **billion** gallons as of June 1, 2026, must be recognized.

Please email me at ssuhoski@townofathol.org if I can provide additional information. The Town looks forward to participating in the Board's discussion on July 10. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Shaun A. Suhoski
Town Manager

Cc: Sen. Jo Comerford, Rep. Susannah Whipps

New Salem
Received 7/2/26

Resolution Supporting the Quabbin Watershed and Regional Equity Act (S.546 / H.1042)

WHEREAS eighty-eight years ago, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts disincorporated and flooded four towns (Dana, Prescott, Greenwich, and Enfield) in the Swift River Valley so that eastern Massachusetts could grow, aided by sufficient pristine drinking water, and

WHEREAS creation of the Quabbin Reservoir required the dismantling of more than 1,100 structures, including upwards of 650 homes; the exhumation of more than 7,600 graves across 34 cemeteries, the stoppage of robust north-south rail service, the scuttling of west-east rail planning, and the shuttering of businesses and industry, and

WHEREAS families who had lived in the Swift River Valley for generations were forced to give up their homes and properties, and

WHEREAS today the 119,940-acre Quabbin Reservoir watershed is both publicly and privately held and New Salem and other watershed towns help to steward an invaluable 412-billion-gallon resource, and

WHEREAS New Salem and other watershed towns work to ensure compliance with state and federal water protection regulations through volunteer and municipally funded positions, and

WHEREAS New Salem and other watershed towns routinely forgo economic development opportunities to protect water quality, even when those opportunities could catalyze our economy,

BE IT RESOLVED that New Salem and other watershed towns are united in their request for just recompense for the region's historic sacrifice and current ecosystem services and therefore petition for:

1. *Increased regional representation* on the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority Board of Directors and Board of Advisors;
2. *Establishment of a Quabbin community trust fund* for the purposes of meeting municipal infrastructure needs and public safety services; and
3. *Reconfiguration of payments in lieu of taxe*s to better recognize the immense value contributed by New Salem and other watershed towns in their stewardship of Quabbin Reservoir.

Received 7/2/26

Town of New Salem
Office of the Selectboard
19 South Main Street, New Salem, MA 01355
Tel. 978-544-6437

July 1, 2026
Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) Board of Directors
MWRA Advisory Board
100 First Avenue, Charlestown Navy Yard
Boston, MA 02129

RE: In Support of the Quabbin Watershed and Regional Equity Act (S.546 / H.1042) and Necessary Host Community Relief

Dear Members of the MWRA Board of Directors and Advisory Board,

On behalf of the Select Board and the residents of the Town of New Salem, we write to express our unequivocal support for S.546 / H.1042, An Act relative to the Quabbin Watershed and regional equity. While eighty-eight years have passed since the Commonwealth disincorporated and flooded the four towns of the Swift River Valley, the economic, structural, and public safety burdens borne by the remaining watershed towns are not ancient history, they are our daily reality.

Today, New Salem and our neighboring watershed towns protect and steward this 412-billion-gallon resource. Boston and surrounding areas thrive because of this water, but our small towns are stuck carrying the financial and physical burdens of protecting it.

Our small, rural municipality continues to face immense hardships in providing standard services due to strict watershed regulations:

- High Engineering and Testing Costs**:** To comply with strict water protection mandates, New Salem must fund specialized engineering and testing just to perform basic, legally required infrastructure repairs. For example, this past fiscal year, we had to spend an extra $8,000 on a single test because a local stream flows into the Quabbin. In a small town budget, an unexpected $8,000 expense means cutting library hours, leaving potholes unfilled, or losing town staff.
- Decimated Economic Base: **:** Unlike other towns that can build up their tax bases with commercial development, New Salem has no such option. Because of our townspeople's

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staunch stewardship, we would never dream of entertaining projects that could endanger the Quabbin waters, whether it be a data center, energy facility, battery storage site, or factory. We choose protection over profit every single day, but locking away this land means we are left with a crippled local tax base and no way to grow.

- Permanent Loss of Infrastructure: The construction of the reservoir severed essential regional infrastructure, notably dismantling the historic north-south "Rabbit Run" railroad. We are left completely isolated from the regional transit advancements enjoyed by the communities that receive our water.

Another major regional inequity lies in public safety. New Salem's emergency personnel hold a deep moral obligation, and a legal expectation, to respond to incidents within the Quabbin watershed land. Our municipal department is funded solely by local taxpayers, yet we shoulder the response burden for a massive state-managed resource.

The small-engine plane crash into the Quabbin Reservoir in New Salem on May 1, 2026, perfectly illustrates this unsustainable arrangement. Our local fire and police personnel were the first on the scene, coordinating a high-stakes rescue and containment effort to protect both human life and your drinking supply.

Shockingly, despite being expected to rush into these wilderness environments, our emergency staff are not even provided with keys to the DCR/MWRA gates. During life-or-death emergencies, our first responders are forced to physically break locks and chains just to access the incident sites. It is entirely unacceptable for a multi-billion-dollar utility network to require local volunteer and small-town personnel to break through state infrastructure to save lives and protect Boston's water without adequate compensation.

The Quabbin Watershed and Regional Equity Act is not a request for a handout; it is a petition for basic fairness and regional balance. We urge the MWRA to back this critical legislation, which secures:

1. Expanded Regional Representation: Guaranteeing seats on the MWRA Board of Directors and Advisory Board for Quabbin watershed community members who understand land protection and host community needs.

Town of New Salem
Office of the Selectboard
19 South Main Street, New Salem, MA 01355
Tel. 978-544-6437

2. Establishment of the Quabbin Host Community Trust Fund: Delivering necessary annual funding to help towns like New Salem stabilize municipal operations, capital improvements, and public safety infrastructure.
3. Reconfiguration of PILOT Payments: Overhauling the current Payment in Lieu of Taxes system to fairly value the immense ecological and economic services our acreage provides.

For decades, eastern Massachusetts has experienced tremendous growth backed by the sacrifice of the Swift River Valley. It is time for the MWRA and the Commonwealth to recognize that true stewardship requires equitable partnership. We ask for your support of S.546 / H.1042 to ensure New Salem can continue to protect this vital resource without bankrupting its own future.

Respectfully submitted,

Selectboard Chair, Rick Taupier

Selectboard Member, Susan Cloutier

Selectboard Member, Carl Seppala

Town Coordinator, Emily Hill

Received 7/6/26

TOWN of PETERSHAM
OFFICE of the SELECTBOARD

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Petersham, Massachusetts 01366
978-724-3353 Fax 978-724-3501
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July 3, 2026

Secretary Rebecca Tepper
MWRA Board Chair
Secretary.Tepper@mass.gov

Dear Secretary Tepper and MWRA Board Members:

We appreciate the opportunity to provide you with the Town of Petersham's perspective and requests for action, in conjunction with the Quabbin Watershed Steward communities and our legislative representatives. We seek from the MWRA full recognition of the inherent and financial value of the 'green infrastructure' provided by the natural landscape and watershed, and of the Town's ongoing efforts to protect these public and working lands.

We further seek financial support to enable this stewardship to safeguard our communities and the MWRA's mission.

The Town's stewardship directly and financially benefits the entire area served by the MWRA through maintaining water quality, and through retaining and enhancing the conditions of Massachusetts' sensitive environmental areas, thereby avoiding prohibitive construction and infrastructure costs that would be needed to clean up contaminated public water supply serving so much of the state's population.

Petersham has always been a small *(< 1900 pop.)* and rural community. Increasing costs for delivering public services are driven by new requirements as well as ongoing inflation, however the tax base cannot keep up with these costs. Our fire, police, and other essential town services are primarily provided by volunteer and part time contributors, and the increasing complexity and mandates for regulatory compliance in all areas – including schools – relentlessly drive costs beyond the town's capacity to adapt.

Additional traditional development – commercial, industrial and residential - would worsen the dilemma rather than improving it. The accelerating costs of additional public services outweigh the modest tax increases derived from additional development, even before the clear costs of environmental degradation – to the town, the region, and the MWRA's mission and finances - are addressed. The town's own water supply does not come from the Quabbin, but faces challenges due to drought, and may well be unable to sustain the impact of further built development. The calculations based on higher density urban and suburban communities do not reflect the realities of Petersham and communities like it.

We share the concerns of our neighbors in the 12 towns stewarding Metropolitan Boston's water supply, and appreciate the advocacy of our representatives in the legislature. To help address these issues we request:

- financial support for our local boards and departments who now manage legal and physical aspects of our forests, streams and roads with limited personnel, training and safety equipment;
- immediate supplemental funding for town Fire Department services and equipment
- increased representation of the 12 watershed communities in MWRA governance at all levels;
- investment in watershed infrastructure, water quality/quantity protection and waste management in our region;
- technical and engineering assistance for local water and waste management concerns, including analysis of the aquifers serving our town's public and private wells
- equitable drought management policies across the Quabbin water system;
- increased representation of Watershed communities in EOEEA/DCR management of the watershed land.

The MWRA and its predecessor agencies have been charged with providing clean water to much of the state. As the attached document outlines, that has been an evolving and challenging task – one that is evolving again as climate conditions and development patterns change.

Effective stewardship of the Quabbin watershed is a fundamental necessity to maintaining the viability of the MWRA, as well as of the 12 watershed communities. The difficulties of cleaning Boston Harbor and our rivers to provide clean water show that, under current local, state and federal financial arrangements, local taxpayers alone cannot afford to preserve the resources they need to ensure their fundamental rights to clean air and clean water. (Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution). We believe that adequate financial support should be provided by the MWRA, whose bonding authority can and should fund the communities underpinning its own mission and financial viability.

We are ready to engage in the next steps to implement action on these topics and look forward to your timely response.

Chair

Vice-Chair

Town of Petersham Selectboard

Attachment: Petersham Quabbin Watershed Conditions & Context

Adopted by the Town of Petersham Selectboard, July 2, 2026, by Unanimous Vote 2-0

cc.

Kristin MacDougall, Assistant Secretary to the MWRA Board of Directors (Kristin.MacDougall@mwra.com)

MWRA Advisory Board (mwra.ab@mwraadvisoryboard.com)

Sen. Joanne Comerford (Jo.Comerford@masenate.gov)

Rep Aaron Saunders (Aaron.Saunders@mahouse.gov)

Petersham Quabbin Watershed: History, Context & Conditions

1920-2000

Chapter 375 of the Acts of 1926 authorized the Commonwealth to construct the reservoir system that ultimately became the Quabbin Reservoir. In doing so, the state exercised extraordinary authority to take land through eminent domain, relocate infrastructure, and to disincorporate the towns of Dana, Prescott, Greenwich, and Enfield to establish a water supply system serving metropolitan Massachusetts. The 1926 Act provided compensation to individual property owners whose land was taken, but it did not establish a long-term framework to address the broader economic impacts on the surrounding municipalities. Large areas of land were removed from local tax bases.

Over the past one hundred years, the Quabbin has become an incredibly successful example of "Nature Based Solutions to Resource Management." Today the Quabbin Reservoir is one of the largest and most important public drinking water supplies in the United States, providing approximately 200 million gallons of clean drinking water each day to 3 million people.

The Quabbin

The Quabbin Reservoir was designed to hold 412 billion gallons of water which required no filtration because it was surrounded by unbroken forest, creating what has been called an "Accidental Wilderness" where bald eagles, loons, moose, coyotes, black bears, and bobcats share the habitat with a sparse human population. Its management was entrusted to the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) a regional planning and management organization created in the late 19th century. It was considered progressive and even revolutionary in its time since it recognized that the natural world has little respect for political subdivisions.

Following WWll, the Federal Interstate Highway Act brought new residential subdivisions, shopping malls and industrial facilities towards the center of the state. Watershed managers realized that many streams in the towns around the Wachusetts and Quabbin Reservoirs were likely to carry pollution into the Quabbin. Over strenuous local opposition, the State used both regulation and land acquisition to try to resolve the problem. In 1989 The Watershed Protection Act (Cohen Bill) prohibited potentially polluting activities within 400-foot strips along the banks of identified tributaries to the Quabbin, Ware and Wachusetts watersheds. The legislature also passed an environmental bond bill allowing large undeveloped open spaces to be purchased at market value and permanently protected from sewage, agricultural and industrial waste. Both actions reinforced the use of natural processes over built infrastructure for water purification, and are key elements in the system's success.

During the boom years after 1945, the state began to worry about water quantity as well as water quality. Modern commercial/industrial infrastructure is notoriously thirsty. There was serious discussion of increasing the supply of Quabbin's water to promote growth in Boston.

In 1982, a study of water resources in Southeastern New England, under the overall coordination of the New England River Basins Commission, inspired the MDC to propose siphoning surplus water during peak spring floods (known as flood-skimming) and pumping it over to the Quabbin. Western Massachusetts communities and state-wide environmental groups were vehemently opposed because of the potential for damage to the river and its banks. Then, as now, Central Massachusetts residents opposed the MDC taking even more of their resources. They suspected that the user communities (ratepayers and host communities) were losing a large amount of their water through leaky pipes. People from Central and Western Massachusetts went to the bi-weekly MDC board meetings (at that time open to the public) to oppose additional water taking. Working together, they showed that a significant percentage of Quabbin water was wasted. A massive repair of the water pipes in Boston and other user communities was successfully completed, removing the need for additional Quabbin water.

Management of wastewater was also a major concern by the 1970s. Boston Harbor, the ultimate recipient of Quabbin's pristine resources, was one of the dirtiest bodies of water in the United States. The Deer Island Plant released massive amounts of inadequately treated raw sewage, grease, and sludge into Boston Harbor every day. A Combined Sewage

Overflow (CSO) system diverted sewage from the treatment plant during rainstorms combining sewage with storm water and sending it into the rivers flowing into the Boston Harbor: the Neponset, the Charles, the Mystic Rivers and Alewife Brook.

In 1984, the Conservation Law Foundation forced the issue by suing the state in federal court to halt pollution of Boston Harbor. The lawsuit resulted in a Consent Decree requiring the state to create a public authority with the ability to sell bonds to finance management of water infrastructure and wastewater treatment.

Prior to 1985, the Quabbin's land and waters had been managed by the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC.) The MDC was created in 1919 by merging the Metropolitan Park Commission with the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board. This newly consolidated agency was tasked with managing regional water supplies, wastewater, and the parks and parkways system. However, the task of maintaining the system was entirely dependent on annual legislative appropriations, making it difficult to secure consistent funding for any of these efforts.

As a result of the Consent Decree the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority was able to raise money that the taxpayers could not, and was therefore able to build a new treatment plant and related infrastructure leaving resource management to the MDC. In 2003 the MDC merged with the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) creating the current Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR.)

An MWRA advisory board was created but its membership did not include the watershed communities and its mission was financial not environmental. The water was treated more as a commodity to be sold rather than recognized as a resource to be protected.

2026: The Current Situation

As of 2026, sewage is given secondary (not tertiary) level treatment. The treated wastewater goes into a 9.5-mile deep-rock outfall tunnel discharging into the deeper currents of Massachusetts Bay. The CSO problem has still not been satisfactorily resolved, and the Conservation Law Foundation has expressed concern recently as have the Watershed Associations in eastern Massachusetts.

The Quabbin Reservoir is Massachusetts' most successful use of a "Nature Based" solution for the management of resources that benefit people, plants and animals. Natural solutions are not free, but are much more cost-effective than traditional "gray" infrastructure. They provide additional benefits including improved public health, new jobs and better biodiversity. In the Quabbin, the forest acts as a "living biofilter." Rain and snowmelt filter through the soil, rock, and plant material, which naturally removes sediments, pollutants, and other contaminants before the water reaches the reservoir. Maintaining major tracts of unbroken forest surrounding intermittent and perennial streams are the key to allowing nature to preserve clean water.

Financial Benefits to the Water Users and Ratepayers

Making dirty or "raw" water safe to drink once it has been polluted is extraordinarily expensive. Based on analyses from the late 1990s, the MWRA saved hundreds of millions of dollars in capital construction costs by securing a filtration waiver from the EPA for the Wachusett Reservoir, opting instead for a state-of-the-art ozone disinfection facility. By contrast, the Springfield Water Board is now looking at nearly 400 million for Springfield's new West Parish Water Treatment plant. The project is facing delay, and likely escalating costs, because of the discovery of toxic PCBs from old underground tanks at the construction site. This system is in the Little River Watershed, of about 14,000 acres.

Financial Costs to Watershed Towns

Petersham makes up a significant part of the Quabbin Reservoir watershed. Its small population is spread over a large and environmentally sensitive area. Like other small rural towns it has a limited tax base and struggles to provide services to its citizens. The town takes seriously its responsibility to guard the precious resources of the state's largest and most successful water supply. Town entities - Conservation Commission, Planning and Zoning Boards, Board of Health, and the Public Works and Fire Departments depend fundamentally on volunteer and modestly-paid part time work. Inadequate resources are available for technical support, required equipment, training, administrative support to address regulatory requirements,

and other costs of protecting the town and the MWRA water supply. Yet the MWRA depends upon them to do their jobs. Further, the town does not use Quabbin water, and must solve its own water quality and waste management problems without adequate resources.

Traditional built development is not the answer in our town

There is no reason to believe that building commercial malls and factories in Petersham would improve the town's overall economic health. Each acre developed damages the effectiveness of the 'green infrastructure', potentially increasing costs for the metropolitan water supply, and increases the demand for public services in Petersham – while providing very modest increases in tax revenue – a net economic loss for each such action.

Locally, the more developed Town of Athol is now facing layoffs and service cuts due to a $1.78 million municipal revenue shortfall in spite of very strong commercial growth during the past 15 years supported by massive public & private investment - which included the paving an entire hillside, building a new intersection off of Route 2 and installing millions of dollars of water & sewer infrastructure.

Need for Action

The Town of Petersham is defined by its many acres of forests, which protect the watershed, but do not now provide a property tax base adequate to support basic local services over such a wide-ranging area. This needs to be addressed by adjustments to PILOT, in part through including the land under the surface of the Quabbin, by implementing the Community Trust, and by strengthened protection and ongoing recognition of the value of these working lands as the green infrastructure they are.

Athol, Barre, Belchertown, Hardwick, New Salem, Shutesbury, Ware, Wendell
Received 7/3/26

Dear Chair and Members of the MWRA Board,

As the Town Managers, Town Administrators and Town Coordinators representing the communities of the Quabbin watershed, we write to ask the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority to strengthen its partnership with the communities that have protected the Commonwealth's drinking water for generations.

Every day, our communities balance the responsibility of safeguarding the watershed while managing the unique challenges that come with serving as host communities. We oversee municipal operations, public safety, roads, emergency response, infrastructure, environmental stewardship, and local government in communities whose economies, tax bases, and opportunities for development have been shaped by the presence of the Quabbin Reservoir and the lands surrounding it.

While we are proud of our role in protecting this invaluable resource, we believe the relationship between the MWRA and the watershed communities can be strengthened through greater collaboration, representation, and investment. We respectfully ask the Board to work with us toward reforms that recognize the contributions and sacrifices of the Quabbin host communities and ensure that our voices are meaningfully included in decisions affecting our region.

Among the reforms we believe deserve serious consideration are:

- Establishing a Quabbin Host Community Development Trust Fund to support the long-term sustainability and economic vitality of the watershed communities.
- Providing representation for Quabbin watershed communities on the MWRA Board so that host communities have a voice in decisions affecting the resource they help protect.
- Modernizing the methodology for Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) by recognizing the full value of the land dedicated to the Commonwealth's water supply, including the land beneath the Quabbin Reservoir.
- Evaluating opportunities to provide Quabbin water to neighboring communities in western and north central Massachusetts before considering any future expansion of water transfers beyond the existing service area.

These concepts are reflected in An Act Relative to the Quabbin Watershed and Regional Equity, but our request extends beyond any single piece of legislation. We are asking the MWRA to recognize that the communities entrusted with protecting the Quabbin watershed should be treated as partners in its future. We believe that regional equity, local representation, and continued investment in host communities will strengthen both the watershed and the Commonwealth's water system for generations to come.

Perspectives from the Quabbin Watershed Communities:

Town of Athol

Athol is recognized as the commercial hub of the North Quabbin region. While the Quabbin watershed includes a modest portion of land in south Athol within its bounds, the flooding of the lost towns of Dana, Enfield, Prescott and Greenwich resulted in the dismantling and closure of the Athol & Enfield Railroad (more fondly known as the Rabbit Line or Rabbit Run) in 1935. The railroad served as an economic lifeline for over 60 years until the reservoir effectively cut-off Athol's trade and lifestyle routes to points south in Enfield, Palmer and Springfield. Today, Athol supports the efforts for fair recompense and representation for each of the communities that still safeguard the primary source of drinking water to over 3.1 million consumers of the MWRA.
Shaun Suhoski
Athol Town Manager

Town of Barre

The Town of Barre's Town Administrator supports this collective call for regional equity, fair representation, and modernized PILOT funding. While a detailed statement of Barre's specific local impacts is being compiled for separate submission, we want to formally record our commitment to these essential reforms.
Melanie Jackson
Barre Town Administrator

Town of Belchertown

Although the Quabbin Reservoir was created nearly a century ago, its impact on the surrounding communities continues today. To protect the water supply for the Boston metropolitan area, extensive state-owned lands surrounding the reservoir remain subject to strict development and land-use restrictions. These limitations reduce opportunities for residential and commercial growth, constrain the local tax base, and make it more difficult for neighboring towns to attract new businesses, expand housing options, and invest in long-term economic development. As a result, many Quabbin-area communities face ongoing financial and planning challenges that differ significantly from those of municipalities without similar restrictions. Belchertown has suffered the loss of approximately 3,200 acres of developable property that could have generated millions in tax revenue to support our essential services including police, fire, and EMS.

The surrounding towns also continue to bear the responsibility of preserving a resource that primarily serves communities outside the region. While the Quabbin Reservoir provides an essential public benefit to millions of Massachusetts residents, the neighboring communities, especially those lacking an east/west connection, experience the tradeoff through reduced development potential, limited infrastructure expansion, and fewer opportunities to diversify their local economies. Small communities

like Belchertown rely in great part on their surrounding towns to support each other's local economic vitality. The impacts of the Quabbin on the regional economy, especially to those communities to our north, have shaped Belchertown's ability to advance economic development.

These lasting impacts highlight the need to recognize the unique circumstances of Quabbin-area municipalities and to consider policies that support their long-term sustainability while maintaining the reservoir's critical role as a public water supply.
Steve Williams
Belchertown Town Manager

Town of Hardwick

The Town of Hardwick has been honored to partner with the Massachusetts Legislature on this important legislation. In 2024, we hosted the twelve communities around the Quabbin Reservoir and members of our community testified on Beacon Hill. As stewards of the Quabbin, the Town of Hardwick maintains the watershed land, which limits the development and restricts Town or commercial use. Our Community has to maintain a certain level of protection to benefit the drinking water without any compensation or representation. Additional revenue, through mechanisms like PILOT payments, would only strengthen the community and help to keep the town's finances and infrastructure sustainable. The Town of Hardwick looks forward to partnering with the MWRA on fair representation, adequate investment, and continuous stewardship of an important water resource for the State of Massachusetts.
Justine Caggiano
Hardwick Town Administrator

Town of New Salem
The Town of New Salem has proudly served as a steward of the Quabbin watershed for generations and has demonstrated its commitment by passing a resolution in support of An Act Relative to the Quabbin Watershed and Regional Equity. We recognize the importance of protecting the Commonwealth's drinking water and have consistently accepted development limitations that safeguard this invaluable resource. Those protections, however, come with significant challenges. Watershed restrictions limit our ability to develop housing, transportation, and a sustainable commercial tax base, making it increasingly difficult for our aging population to remain in the community and forcing many residents to leave to find accessible housing and services elsewhere. Our taxpayers also bear higher infrastructure costs, including more expensive culvert projects designed to protect water quality, while emergency response and associated costs for the Quabbin also fall on the Town. Like many rural communities, New Salem is struggling to sustain essential municipal infrastructure and services. After voters rejected an override because many residents simply could not afford a higher tax burden, the Town has been forced to defer needed investments despite growing costs. We support reforms that strengthen the partnership between the MWRA and Quabbin host communities through greater representation, equitable investment, and recognition of the vital role our communities play in protecting one of the Commonwealth's most important natural resources. By investing in the communities that protect the watershed, the

Commonwealth can help ensure that both the Quabbin and its host communities remain strong for generations to come.
Emily Hill
Town of New Salem Town Coordinator

Town of Shutesbury

For Shutesbury, protecting the Commonwealth's water supply means that well over half of our town's total land area is state-owned and permanently tax-exempt. This massive conservation footprint severely caps our local property tax base, shifting a disproportionate financial burden onto our residential taxpayers to fund basic municipal services, infrastructure, and our school. We strongly support the evaluation of opportunities to provide Quabbin water to western and north-central Massachusetts. Regional equity means ensuring that the communities stewarding the clean, drinking water for nearly 3 million people (or approximately 43% of Commonwealth's population) are not left out of the benefits of the very resource they protect. Modernizing the PILOT program and establishing a Host Community Trust Fund are vital to ensuring that Shutesbury's long-term financial survival isn't sacrificed for the environmental benefit of eastern Massachusetts. This legislation offers a critical path forward, transforming our relationship with the MWRA from a series of mandates into a true, mutually supportive partnership.
Hayley Bolton
Town of Shutesbury Town Administrator

Town of Ware

The Town of Ware, through its Selectboard and Town Meeting, have voted to support the request for additional regional representation and equitable funding for the Quabbin region's towns. Ware recognizes the importance of the watershed for provision of water to many communities. The Town also understands the benefits reaped by the region by having a natural and recreational resource available to its residents. These benefits, however, are offset in part by the limitations on growth in our town, by the isolation from neighboring communities, and by having little say in the use of the Reservation and the Reservoir. Like most communities in Massachusetts, Ware is struggling with infrastructure and operations concerns. Consideration of overrides is inevitable. The Town's water is tainted with manganese and iron, and the threat of PFAS. Remedies will all be costly. Having the ability to better share in the Commonwealth's resources and with the MWRA could benefit all Quabbin communities. The proposed steps for representation and for resource sharing begin an important path toward equity and fairness. Please recognize the role that the Quabbin communities provide in the protection of a resource that is used by all.
Stuart Beckley, Town Manager
Town of Ware

Town of Wendell

The Town of Wendell strongly encourages the MWRA and the Commonwealth to support the Quabbin Watershed towns with fair compensation, and legislative efforts like the Quabbin Host Community Trust Fund and Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) which are more than fair requests for continued pristine water delivered to over 2.7 million people in the Boston area. We ask the board to continue collaborating with local leaders to find a balanced, sustainable partnership that respects and appreciates the immense value they receive daily from the Quabbin Watershed Stewards.
Kelly Tyler
Town of Wendell Town Manager

Additional Correspondence

7/10/26 Talking points and photos, Ed Comeau, Board member of the Friends of Quabbin and vice-chair of Belchertown Communications Committee; 7/10/26 Talking points, Lesa Lessard Pearson, Past Chair, Vice Chair and member of Belchertown Select Board; 7/10/26 Quabbin Reservoir Watershed Elevation Relief Map 2010; 7/10/26 Compilation of public comments regarding Quabbin matters from Dr. Matteo Pangallo, Lynne Feldman, Judith Eiseman, Dr. Deborah Leta Habib, Johanna Bartlett, Barbara J Cooper, Carolyn Manley, Mary Ashburne, Tom Salahna, Rebecca Jackson, James Pewtherer, Diane Jacoby, Sarah Fairfield, Mary Thomas, Jody Shapiro, Michael Seitz, Alisa Pearson, Leslie Cerier, Bill Pula, Frank Kanserstein, Susie Mosher, Joan Levy, Dina Stander, Josh Chernin, Steven Botkin, Thomas Edward Ziniti, Anne Cutler-Russo, MaryEllen Kennedy, Ruth Suyenaga, Barbara Cooper, Abbie Jenks, Karen Traub, Elizabeth Murphy, Jeff Weston, Serge and Meredith Fedorovsky, Christine Heard, George Arvanitis, Catherine Hilton, Margaret Haight, Sharon Stevenson, Kelly Tyler; Kristin DeBoer, Jeff Weston, Chip Jones, Michael DeChiara, David Gross, Daniel G Leahy, Robert L. Cole, Alan Dery, Ruth Rinard, Nancy Dill, Sarah & William Greeneaf, and Cameron Dunbar; 7/10/26 Letter, Jeff Weston, Shutesbury Planning Board; 7/7/26 Proclamation, Town of Athol; Handout: Quabbin area towns, acreage, taxes, revenue, PILOT (FY26).

Received 7/10/2026

Ed Comeau | edcomeau@gmail.com | 413-896-5718

Good morning. My name is Ed Comeau, a long-time resident of Belchertown, a board member of the Friends of Quabbin and vice-chair of the Belchertown Communications Committee. However, I am speaking to you today, not in these roles, but as an avid nature photographer who spends a great deal of time in the Quabbin Watershed where I see, first-hand, the impact of the drought upon the Quabbin.

This makes me ask a question given today's climate-driven conditions...are we having our Lake Powell moment and is this a key opportunity not to be wasted?

The water level at the Quabbin has been on a downward slope since for over two years and is now 10 feet below capacity, or at approximately 80%, which is officially below normal. While the combined Quabbin and Wachusett system still represents an extraordinary reserve, I feel that there is cause for concern. It is going to take years to restore the water levels, and there are a number of other communities in the MWRA system undergoing significant droughts that may need to activate their emergency connections to the MWRA system. creating even more demand.

Climate change means that the future will not resemble the past. Longer dry periods, warmer temperatures, and changing precipitation patterns make demand management increasingly important.

So...are we having our Lake Powell moment?

In the western United States, if they had taken stronger action earlier, would they be in the water crisis that they face now? Can we use this as a teachable moment to make proactive changes in how people use water to avoid a similar crisis right here in our own backyard?

Of the thirty-five communities that receive Quabbin water as their primary water supply, only one community, Reading, has implemented water conservation. More than 140 public water suppliers outside of the MWRA system, elsewhere in Massachusetts, have implemented mandatory restrictions because of drought conditions.

Even modest reductions in water use by the 2.7 million residents that receive Quabbin Water, together with commercial and institutional customers, could save millions of gallons during this drought.

So, here's The Ask...To avoid a Lake Powell moment, I ask you to act proactively and reconsider your current policy of not imposing water restrictions until the Quabbin has dropped to lower levels. Water conservation should be a shared, state-wide effort and the MWRA has an opportunity to lead by working with member communities to develop a conservation strategy that reflects today's climate-driven conditions. This is an opportunity to build long-term behavioral change when it comes to water conservation and demand reduction.

My professional career has been focused on fire prevention and Community Risk Reduction, and I know the difficulty of selling prevention to the public. However, just because it is hard does not mean that it should not be done, because the benefits dramatically outweigh the effort.

The question is not whether we have enough water. The question is whether we are doing everything we reasonably can do today, to protect it for tomorrow. The best time to conserve water is before a crisis, not during one.

I appreciate your time in listening to me today, thank you.

Ed Comeau | edcomeau@gmail.com | 413-896-5718

Current Quabbin Water Level, Gate 16, Shutesbury
Approximately 10 feet below capacity with 80 feet of exposed shoreline visible



Quabbin Water Level When it is at 100% Capacity



Received 7/10/26

Good Morning,

The Quabbin Reservoir is often called one of the greatest engineering achievements in Massachusetts history. It is also a commitment to provide clean, safe drinking water to millions of residents. As water supply challenges grow across the region, that commitment is increasingly important. For nearly a century, the communities surrounding the Quabbin have helped uphold it. Today, I am asking the Commonwealth to uphold its commitment to us.

Good morning. My name is Lesa Lessard Pearson, and I have the privilege of serving as past Chair, Vice Chair and member of the Belchertown Select Board for the past four years.

Let me be clear: Belchertown is proud to be a steward of one of the Commonwealth's most important natural resources. We understand the need to protect the Quabbin Reservoir, and we are not asking for those protections to be weakened.

But stewardship carries costs.

While millions benefit from the Quabbin every day, the responsibility for protecting it is concentrated in a small number of communities like mine. Lands surrounding the reservoir are permanently restricted from residential and commercial development that would otherwise sustain tax revenue, local businesses, housing, and essential services.

For Belchertown, this means thousands of acres that cannot contribute to our local economy. For neighboring Quabbin communities, many of which have lost an even greater share of developable land, the impact is more severe. Because our regional economies are interconnected, these constraints affect all of us.

In addition, these restrictions limit our ability to respond to statewide priorities such as housing production and economic growth. While other communities can expand to meet demand, Quabbin communities are asked to absorb the consequences of limited growth without the same tools to adapt. This creates an imbalance that undermines both local resilience and broader state goals.

This is not just a Belchertown issue. It is a regional issue and a statewide responsibility.

The Quabbin is a statewide asset. All communities that rely on its water share in its benefits. The communities that protect it should not bear a disproportionate share of its costs.

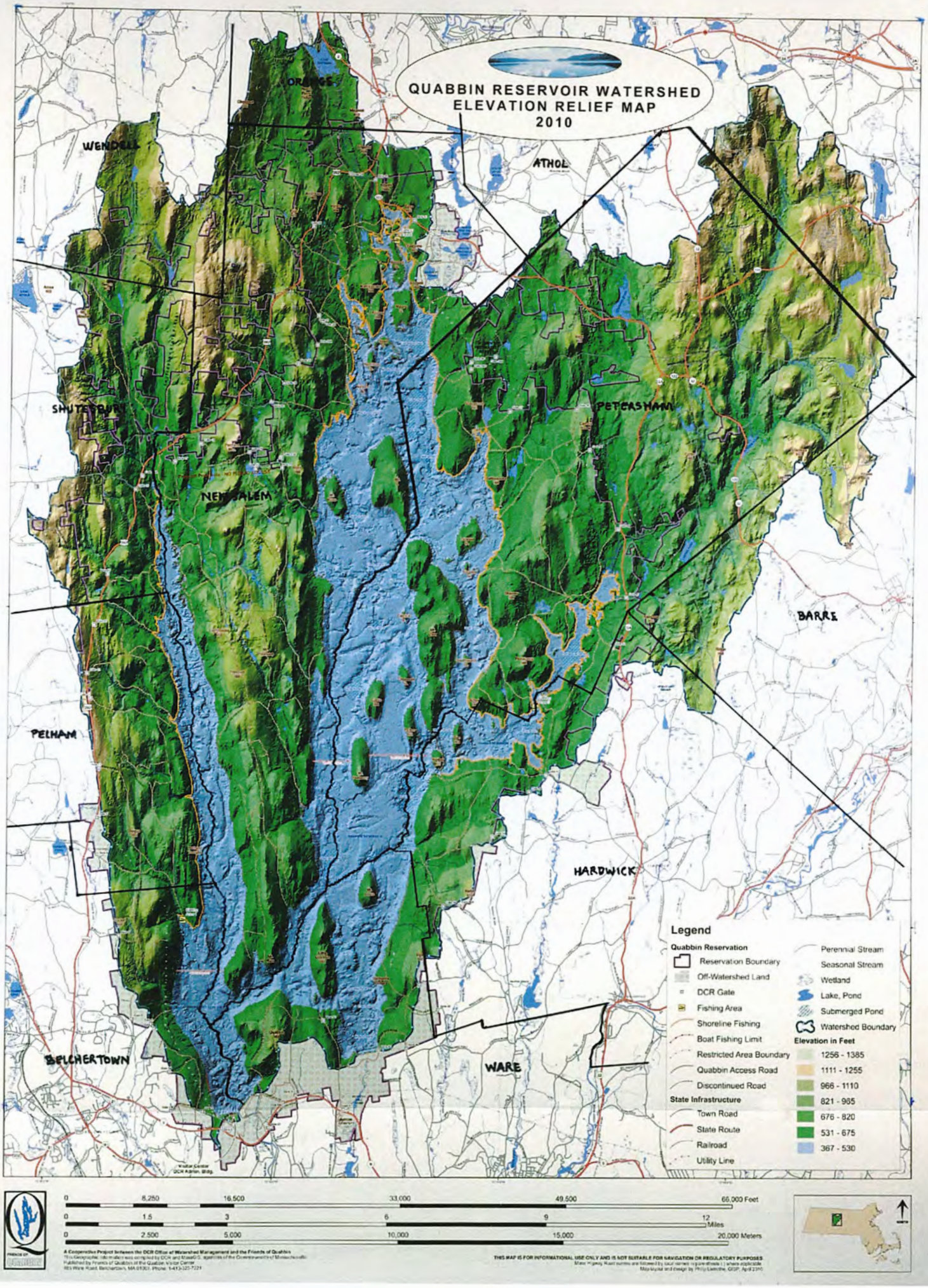
As you consider the future of the Quabbin watershed, I ask that you recognize surrounding communities as essential partners. Strong communities reinforce a strong watershed.

Sustaining the Quabbin requires sustaining the communities that protect it.

I urge you to provide equitable funding that reflects lost tax base, targeted economic development to offset growth limitations, and policy tools that allow for housing and local investment while maintaining environmental protections. Strengthening these communities strengthens the Commonwealth. Thank you.

Lesa Lessard Pearson-Belchertown Select Board-llpearson@belchertown.org

Received 7/10/26



Received 7/10/26

Dr. Matteo Pangallo, Land Use Clerk, Town of Shutesbury; Chair, Community Preservation Committee, Town of Shutesbury.
138 Locks Pond Road, Shutesbury, MA 01072

For nearly a century, residents in the towns around the Quabbin Reservoir have faithfully upheld one of our Commonwealth's most profound collective commitments: safeguarding clean, reliable water for eastern Massachusetts. Although we are not given access to the water we provide and protect, we have done this responsibly and at tremendous cost. Now, that cost has become unsustainable.

Take my town of Shutesbury, a Massachusetts community of 1,800 people on the western shore of Quabbin. One of every three acres in our town is held by the Commonwealth to protect the reservoir. That land is permanently blocked from development, permanently removed from the town's tax base, and permanently vital to Boston's survival. Yet the financial arrangement that compensates Shutesbury for this sacrifice treats the land as almost worthless, and costs those of us who call Shutesbury home almost $3 million every year.

Shutesbury's FY27 town budget is $8.4 million.

Like many towns, we depend on ever-increasing residential property taxes to pay that cost. Unlike many towns, we cannot slow those tax increases through development. Shutesbury lacks a commercial or industrial tax base because we have no public water supply (even though Quabbin is literally in our town) and because most land suitable for such development is within the one-third of town taken by the Commonwealth to buffer the reservoir. The result for all the Quabbin towns is a budget crisis that has become an existential threat, with schools facing closure, roads and bridges left unrepaired, and fire, police, and safety departments understaffed.

In towns where the Commonwealth takes land off local tax rolls, it provides Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOTs). This year, Shutesbury received $346,500 for the 5,802 acres of our town held by the Commonwealth. That's 4% of our town's revenue in exchange for 34% of our land and comes to just $59.72 per acre. Every Quabbin town suffers this disparity. Pelham, for example, gives up 35% of its land for the reservoir and gets $56.59 per acre. Hardwick gives up 20% and gets $26.24 per acre. New Salem gives up 91% for just $21.21 per acre.

Statewide, the average PILOT is about $130 per acre.

Shutesbury's Quabbin land has the potential to generate tax revenue of $597 per acre. That means our PILOT of $59.72 per acre is just 10% of the land's actual tax value. We are forced to forgo revenue of up to $537 per acre, or $3.1 million this year alone, because of Quabbin.

This inequity stems from a catch-22: PILOTs are based on real estate value, but by law, Quabbin land cannot be developed. On paper, the land is thus nearly worthless—so much so, in fact, that the total amount of our PILOT for it has barely changed at all in the past three years and is actually lower than it was in FY24 (when it was $375,632). In reality, the Quabbin land in Shutesbury, as in the other Quabbin host communities, is the most valuable land in Massachusetts, because without it, more than 2.7 million people in 53 communities throughout greater Boston and eastern Massachusetts would have no water. That's 40% of the state population.

If Shutesbury's Quabbin land were developed to the same density as the rest of town, it would generate enough tax revenue to pay 37% of our budget. That means every Shutesbury homeowner pays 37% more in property taxes because of the reservoir. We are, thus, through our higher property taxes, subsidizing the true cost of the water used by our eastern neighbors.

When the Quabbin host communities, our legislators, our citizens, and our supporters talk about Quabbin equity, then, we are talking about the state's obligation to make us whole. We are talking about the moral imperative the Commonwealth has to bring Quabbin towns' finances in line with comparable communities across the state by offsetting a fair portion of the cost burden imposed on us by the presence of the reservoir, helping us achieve solvency, stability, and the ability to maintain our schools, roads, emergency services, and other basic services—including the very conservation and land use regulation services that keep Quabbin safe, guarding the groundwater, aquifer, and ecological context that supplies the reservoir, and thus eastern Massachusetts, with clean water every single day. The very resources that the MWRA, in its mission, is tasked with protecting.

In the 1930s, when the Swift River Valley was flooded to make Quabbin, the people of Enfield, Greenwich, Prescott, Dana, Millington, and other smaller villages surrendered homes, farms, businesses, and communities for the good of the Commonwealth. Those towns no longer exist, but, 88 years later, the towns surrounding Quabbin continue to sacrifice for the reservoir and everyone it serves. It is time for the Commonwealth to recognize and remedy that sacrifice.

We are not asking for charity. We are asking for equity. Because while Boston drinks our water, we drown.

In 1927, the New York Times reported on the plan to dismantle the four Quabbin towns, observing, "Greater Boston by no means is indifferent to the tragedy which the need of the city inflicts upon these innocent bystanders." Those of us who live in the remaining Quabbin towns hope that our neighbors in greater Boston remain "by no means indifferent" to our continuing suffering, endured on their behalf, and that the MWRA and our elected officials act before even more Massachusetts communities are forced underwater.

Lynne Feldman
14 Hardwick Rd. Petersham, MA 01366

We in Petersham take great pride in caring for the land that supplies and purifies the water that our neighbors to the east rely on. This means we cannot have the economic development that supports services in other communities; our residents pay for most services through their property taxes. This bill would allow us to continue preserving and protecting the Quabbin the way we have done for decades.

Judith Eiseman, Pelham citizen
88 Arnold Road, Pelham, MA 01002

The town of Pelham protects Quabbin Watershed land as well as Amherst, Shutesbury, Belchertown, and its own private wells by having made the entire town a Water Supply Protection District. Some land not taken by Quabbin still is protected by our town's laws. The result of our concern for this vital resource is that there is little room for building new homes and really only the designated Village Center which is serviced by Town of Amherst Water and sewer that can be expected to provide any tax base to keep the town and our schools running. We don't want to endanger water supply or wildlife habitat so assistance from MWRA to keep our focus on water and help the town survive is a mutual win for those who draw their water from Quabbin and for our town.

Dr. Deborah Leta Habib, Seeds of Solidarity Farm and Education Center
165 Chestnut Hill Road, Orange MA 01364

Greetings. I write as a North Quabbin resident, family farmer, and educator who runs an environmentally oriented non -profit organization. We have lived in Orange for 30 years. In this time, we have become well aware of the beauty and amazing communities in the North Quabbin, as well as the tremendous financial disparities. One of these is the fact that the Quabbin reservoir, while a beautiful habitat for many creatures, has a long and current history of negatively impacting our culture, agriculture and economy. I ask that the MWRA take action on current bills and efforts to include and compensate communities here for the sacrifices we make. As farmers, we rely on a deep well on our land. Unlike residents of MA to the east, we do not have access to the clear waters of the Quabbin that also flooded the Swift River valley that could have continued to provide much local food and land-based livelihoods as it did for years prior to

the creation of the reservoir. Instead, it serves those to the east (most of whom don't even know where their water comes from). We are grateful for the work of our legislators and the Quabbin Watershed Stewards who have done the proper and overdue legwork to honor, include the voices of, and properly compensate our communities who are greatly in need of such recognition and justice at this time. Thank you, Deb Habib

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Johanna Bartlett
299 Farley Road Wendell

Generally those of us in this part of the state feel disregarded and under compensated for our contributions to our state.

Barbara J Cooper, Athol MA resident
739 Daniel Shays Hwy, B22, Athol MA 01331

As a resident of Athol MA and local to the Quabbin Reservoir it is important for us in our town to have access to the Quabbin's water and request to be added as such.

Carolyn Manley, Wendell resident
131 Locke Hill Rd, Wendell, MA 01379

I am a Wendell resident with property affected by the Cohen Bill which restricts my ability to build any structures other than what is approved by the DEP. This watershed affects my use of my property but it does not afford me any further rights to use of the area encompassed by the Quabbin Watershed. I am required to pay property taxes on the full valuation of my property when the Quabbin Watershed pays only a disproportionate share of the taxes that should be levied on the affected property. Our towns are still expected to safeguard the property in the event of fire or mishap with no additional payments to cover the cost. I feel the affected towns should be provided for in a more equitable manner as compensation for providing Boston with drinking water.

Mary Ashburne
264 Wendell Rd. New Salem

I am a resident of New Salem. I moved here from the Boston area because of the beauty of the region. I've long understood the importance of the Quabbin to eastern Mass. residents—I

required my first home be within the MWRA system, knowing the water would be high quality. Now I live in a town where the DCR controls much of the land, and therefore land use, in order to protect that water.

This accidental wilderness is great, but comes at a high price for my community. With little ability to bring in tax dollars from development, our resources are severely limited. As well, we've been hit with significant obligations to mitigate PFAS contaminated wells. We are unable to afford sudden increases in group health insurance and are forced to cut staff at our elementary school. We've been among the last places in the state to receive high-speed internet, cell service is still spotty, and emergency services are spread over large swaths of land, not to mention the big reservoir in the middle that blocks direct access to other towns. Our wells run dry, despite our proximity to 412 billion gallons of water! These are all linked.

The state Payment In Lieu Of Taxes compensation in no way covers the costs of protecting the Quabbin. New Salem protects 34,000 acres for Quabbin. For which we receive $21 per acre. Which has not changed since at least 2021.

The towns surrounding the Quabbin need representation on the MWRA Board to bring our perspective to policy decisions. We need fair compensation so we can afford to protect the water supply.

Thank you for meeting to listen to us.

Tom Salahna, North Worcester County Quabbin Anglers
236 So. Main St. Orange

As a board member of the Quabbin Anglers (36+ years) I have witnessed many changes to Quabbin and have been involved in creating new legislation designed to allow recreational access while protecting the water supply. Access to the water that we have helped protect for close to 50 years is fair compensation.

Rebecca Jackson, Petersham Board of Health
Petersham

Are people in Boston taught how to conserve water? Or asked to? What happens when we have a fire in the Quabbin forest?

James Pewtherer, Pelham Housing Committee Member
35 Buffam Road, Pelham, Massachusetts

We are pleased to share the water from our town with our fellow citizens in Metro Boston. However, we have given up half the town to clear the Quabbin watershed of any roads or buildings, in order to ensure that the water in the reservoir is as pure as we can make it. The Town of Pelham is now left with only 8% of the land that is suitable for homes and businesses and a tax base that is increasingly difficult for our town citizens to maintain. There are few affordable properties suitable for building and young families cannot afford to live in the town. Our school budget has become so limited that our last local school may have to close. Additional funding to Pelham from the Commonwealth in exchange for our water would be a great help in easing the tax burden. Moreover, it would help us to attract more families and grow the town so that we can maintain the services which the town can provide to the people of Pelham. Thank you for your consideration.

Diane Jacoby, Resident of Quabbin town
230 Leverett Road Shutesbury MA 01072

One by one the private wells in my community have become contaminated or have run dry. The money paid to my community "in lieu of taxes" does not compensate. Recently we traveled to Boston, stayed in a hotel, enjoyed the quality of the water, and noticed that there was zero effort being made to conserve water. No water conserving fixtures anywhere. Here in my community the building code requires water conserving devices.

Eastern Massachusetts is stealing from the Quabbin Communities. Plain and simple. This needs to stop. Now.

Sarah Fairfield
281 Leverett Rd

I would like to see the rule changed to allow people to walk their dogs in the Quabbin Watershed. It seems particularly punitive to single out pet owners who may never bring their dogs near the water. It surely can't be an issue about health and sanitation. I have thought that it is a rule that keeps people away and that it is the primary reason for not allowing them.
I would also like to see a significant increase in the PLT amount, starting at $100,000 per annum and increasing yearly to keep up with town expenses of schools and roads, fire and police protection.

Mary Thomas, Wendell Conservation Commission
PO Box 994, Wendell, MA 01379

I've only recently become aware that the water I drank and bathed in while I was in school in Boston in the 1960s came at the sacrifice of 4 small towns in central and western MA which were eliminated by the creation of the Quabbin Reservoir in the 1930s. 96 years after those towns were made to disappear, small towns that surround the Quabbin continue to make sacrifices in order to supply eastern MA with clean water. And for 96 years, these small towns have not been compensated for Eastern MA's use of the water that comes from our watershed properties.

We have also endured added expenses. Here's just one example; in 2023, when Swift River Elementary School's well water was found to contain PFAS, the school could not use Quabbin water. It had no option but to buy bottled water. Swift River School is in New Salem, which borders the reservoir, but New Salem is not able to use that water.
The towns surrounding the Quabbin are primarily forested, which filters the water better than any many-made filtration system could. Many of us have chosen to live here because of these forests, but it too comes at a cost. Solar developers view our forests as unused land which should be cleared for large solar fields. Protecting the forests from solar application after solar application keeps our town boards stretched to the max at the towns' expense. Wendell, where I live, has one of the highest real estate tax rates in the state at $20.50 per $1,000 of assessed value. The average residential tax rate in Massachusetts is $12.18 per $1,000 of assessed value, according to JOESHIMKUS.COM.

I hope the residents of Eastern MA will recognize these inequities and choose to compensate our small Western MA towns for the considerable contribution we make to your quality of life.

Jody Shapiro, Shutesbury resident
50 Cushman Rd, Amherst MA 01002

My tiny rural town pays the second-highest taxes in the Commonwealth. My property taxes are INSANE. We have no businesses in town, zero. There is literally nowhere to buy coffee, there's no convenience store for necessities, no office park or medical practice, no enterprise of any kind to help shoulder our tax burden. We lack reasonable public safety infrastructure beyond our tiny police and fire depts because we can't afford them--in fact after 5 PM we rely on police from Shelburne, 40 min away! I live just 1/2 mile from the Amherst town line/Hampshire County line. My home is in a cell-service black hole, Verizon doesn't maintain our copper phone lines, and no cable company will serve my community. So when the power goes out (which it does) we have no way to reach 911. We are poor as a municipality and unfairly stressed as property owners

because being a Quabbin community keeps us that way: this is the price Shutesbury keeps on paying for having such a huge chunk of our land in the Quabbin watershed. We don't even get water for our sacrifice! 25 years ago when I lived in Belmont, I drank Quabbin water! Now I live right on top of Quabbin and get nothing from it except a municipality kept impoverished because Massachusetts took this massive natural resource from us without compensation, and we have to protect its watershed from development. It's long past time Shutesbury and the other Quabbin zone towns be compensated--with back benefits--for the gigantic contribution we have made and continue to make to the eastern part of our Commonwealth.

Michael Seitz, resident
167 North Main Street

Stay away from this town. There is an extreme distrust of leadership to act in our best interest. Our water is fine, we will take care of our own. We don't want another level of bureaucracy messing things up. Just stay away!

Alisa Pearson, Pelham resident
19 South Valley, Pelham, MA 01002

Please help Pelham: as a selectboard member I saw time and again how our town does not have the resources to support basic services, and our taxes continue to rise in an unsustainable way. We are rural and our watershed is our greatest resource. So much of our town is dedicated to the benefit of those communities in the East that need the watershed that we steward. Doesn't it make sense that meaningful support could flow our way through PILOT? We are all in this together, thank you for keeping our roads drive-able, our students supported, our elders able to live in dignity.

Leslie Cerier
58 Schoolhouse Rd. Shutesbury, Massachusetts 01072

This seems unfair and should be changed: The communities that surround the Quabbin Reservoir steward an invaluable resource — world-class, pristine drinking water — but cannot access Quabbin water and receive minimal compensation (through a Payment in Lieu of Taxes or PILOT payment) for the region's sacrifice. Furthermore, boating is allowed on the Quabbin but no Swimming. That seems wrong. Why would you allow gas boats or any kind of boat that could carry contaminants?

Bill Pula, Pelham Board of Health, member QWAC
20 Arnold Rd Pelham, MA 01002

Pelham is a small community of fewer than 1,300 people that was greatly affected by the construction of the Quabbin Reservoir. The town lost one-third of its most productive land as well as its village center. The land in the Swift River Valley was far better suited for agriculture and, at the time, small-scale manufacturing than the hilly terrain that remained. In return for that loss, Pelham receives PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) payments roughly equivalent to the property taxes on about 30 homes. We have no retail or other commercial businesses and must support our schools and all other town services almost entirely through residential property taxes.

As Chair of the Board of Health, I was involved in the UMass/DEP program that tested private wells for PFAS compounds. We sampled 38 wells, and six tested positive for PFAS. Two exceeded the Massachusetts DEP Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL). That represents more than 15% of the wells tested. There are nearly 500 additional private wells in Pelham that were not tested, and many residents continue to drink that water. Testing costs between $600 and $1,000 per sample, and installing a whole-house treatment system typically costs between $3,000 and $5,000. Pelham could greatly benefit from the laboratory resources and technical expertise of the MWRA in addressing this public health issue.

One final comment: As a member of the Quabbin Watershed Advisory Committee (QWAC), I learned that DCR was planning to use glyphosate extensively throughout the watershed to control invasive—and in some cases native—plants. When I raised concerns, they were dismissed by the forestry staff. I wrote to the DCR Commissioner, and only after Senator Jo Comerford became involved was I informed, secondhand, that the plan had been put on hold—not abandoned, but merely subjected to further review.

As someone with a master's degree in Environmental Engineering and more than 40 years of experience working with public drinking water supplies and water quality,I believe this approach is misguided. Given the ongoing controversy surrounding glyphosate and the responsibility of every drinking water utility to maintain public confidence in the safety of its water supply, the last thing we should be doing is applying a chemical that the World Health Organization has classified as a probable carcinogen within a public drinking water watershed.

Thank you,

Bill Pula

Frank Kanserstein, Democratic Town Committee, Convention Delegate
837 Partridgeville Rd. #C4

Our region is suffering public and private layoffs, reduced public financial access, roads that look like they are in a war zone and downtowns that match. MONEY is needed. We are being asked to restrict water use when we are next to the largest water resource in New England. I cleaned up the water in Barre with a sewer in the watershed zone. Thank you, Humbly yours, Frank Kanserstein

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Susie Mosher, Shutesbury Finance Committee Member
360 Cooleyville Rd. Shutesbury MA

Democracy is all about representation by the people, for the people. The MWRA Board must have much better representation from the towns that protect the Quabbin watershed. We are stewards, not voiceless servants.

Our town STRONGLY supports protection of the environment in Shutesbury. Our Planning Board and Conservation Commission bylaws are geared to restrict development in sensitive areas.

On the other hand, our town's ability to develop economically is constrained by the Quabbin Reservoir. Although Rt. 202 runs along the eastern edge of our town, this potential commercial asset is limited by the land that protects the water supplied to the MWRA by the Quabbin. 73.5% of our town's revenue is from residential taxes. To fairly compensate for protected state lands, we need improved, fair PILOT payments to help sustain our town services such as Government, Fire, Police and Education.

In the spirit of fairness and democracy, Susie Mosher

Joan Levy, Long time Pelham resident
201 N. Valley Rd,, Pelham, MA

Support An Act Relative to the Quabbin Watershed and Regional Equity (S.546/H.1042) to ensure fairness for the towns that protect the water upon which 2.7 million people rely.

Dina Stander
106 Sand Hill Rd. Shutesbury MA 01072

The MWRA controls/restricts development in an entire third of the town of Shutesbury to protect water that is piped to Boston. Another third of the town's land is controlled by a 'tree farm' and pays little tax. This means that the entire tax burden is supported by property owners because there is no commercial business here to tax. We don't even have a gas station and have to go to a neighboring town to buy bread and eggs. Being on the Quabbin's western shore we are responsible for protecting the watershed. And we've done this for close to a hundred years without due compensation. We have kept this trust. Its time for a more equitable arrangement. So much of the prosperity of the easter part of the state is nourished by the waters of the west. Its time for Boston to give back.

Josh Chernin, Petersham Selectboard
354 Barre Rd

I wanted to tell you how badly we need the Quabbin Equity Support legislation. The towns surrounding the Quabbin are the stewards of much of Massachusetts' water supply, yet we get not a drop of it, incur the costs of stewardship, and are struggling financially. The state does not end in Worcester... it's time to right this wrong!

Steven Botkin, Pelham resident
201 North Valley Road, Pelham, MA

The communities that surround the Quabbin Reservoir steward an invaluable resource — world-class, pristine drinking water — but cannot access Quabbin water and receive minimal compensation (through a Payment in Lieu of Taxes or PILOT payment) for the region's sacrifice. Support An Act Relative to the Quabbin Watershed and Regional Equity (S.546, H 1042) to ensure fairness for the towns that protect the water upon which 2.7 million people rely.

Thomas Edward Ziniti, Orange Democratic Town Committee Chair
97 Town Farm Road, Orange, MA 01364-9669

The Quabbin towns are restricted in what they can do concerning development. I see this as an environmentally sound policy. The Quabbin towns, however, should have a stronger voice by way of increased MWRA Board representation, and payments in leu of taxes (PILOT) should be increased, especially at this time when towns are challenged to provide basic services on lean budgets. Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in!

Anne Cutler-Russo
2766 Chestnut Hill Avenue, Athol

I am so thankful to be living in the North Quabbin area. I like to hike and one of my favorite places is the Quabbin reservation. I am aware of the effort made to manage the area and provide clean drinking water to other communities. However, our area struggles financially and an unsuccessful override has stressed town services. I would like the MWRA to consider PILOT payments to towns like Athol and include representatives from these towns on the Board.

MaryEllen Kennedy, New Salem citizen
PO Box 36, New Salem MA 01355

The majority of land in our town is owned by the Commonwealth to maintain the quality of the water that flows from the Quabbin. This year we were forced to make some painful decisions in limiting services, including in our school due to budgetary limits. It seems fair that we should be adequately represented on the MWRA Board and compensated for the restrictions in growth we make in order to preserve this valuable resource.

Ruth Suyenaga, Royalston Democratic Town Committee
35 New Boston Rd

I believe that (1)there should be more Quabbin town representation on the MWRA Board and (2) payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) from the State to the Quabbin Towns should be increased.

I agree with this statement by the Quabbin Watershed Stewards, "When we face water restrictions during drought conditions, those restrictions are rarely matched by conservation measures in MWRA system communities. It would seem fair that when we are under drought conditions, water users should also be taking steps to safeguard the water we are sending east."

Today, our communities face a deepening water crisis. Western Massachusetts municipalities have been forced to issue water use restrictions to protect dwindling supplies, even as eastern Massachusetts communities continue to receive their full allocation.

The communities surrounding the Quabbin cannot drink the Quabbin water like residents of eastern MA and rural households like mine have to go to great expense to have dig and maintain personal wells.

The communities surrounding the Quabbin should be compensated for the sacrifices we have made by having an increase in payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) from the State to help our economically struggling towns.

Sincerely,
Ruth Suyenaga
35 New Boston Road
Royalston, MA 01368

Barbara Cooper, Retired librarian
11 South Valley Rd

As a resident of Pelham for 50 yrs. - and a retired librarian and former member of WSCAC (watershed community action committee) I am appalled that we residents - the Quabbin abutters/conservators) who have given our land, our homes, and protected the watershed for nearly a century(!) - are still seeking some form of reparations (compensation) for taking on the many responsibilities of custodians of a reservoir that supplies the easternmost part of our state with clean drinking water....all while drilling and maintaining expensive deep private wells (and creating exclusionary zoning to protect said wells). Does this seem an unreasonable request?

Abbie Jenks, Pelham MA resident
18 Jones Rd., Pelham MA

The water you drink has been well cared for by Pelham and the surrounding towns. It means that much of Pelham cannot be used for building or expansion for homes and businesses. Yet we know that water is life giving for us all. Please understand it is a precious resource that should not be taken for granted and has a cost. Please honor our water by increasing your help monetarily to support our efforts to make the Quabbin watershed a forever asset.

Karen Traub, Volunteer at the Swift River Valley Historical Society
248 Locks Pond Rd Shutesbury Mass

More than 2,500 living people and 7,500 graves were displaced for the creation of a reservoir for Boston. People who didn't have the money or power to defend themselves got pennies on the dollar for farms and businesses that took generations to build. It was the ultimate sacrifice and it should not be forgotten. We, the surrounding towns are left to preserve the memories of the

people and protect the land even though we do not have access to the water provided by the reservoir. We need fair representation and compensation.

Elizabeth Murphy, Shutesbury
452 West Pelham Rd, Shutesbury, MA 01072

We love the Quabbin and we are good neighbors and happy to keep it pristine but Shutesbury is having water crises and other problems that we can barely afford. It feels unfair to have PFAS filled water in Shutesbury (especially on Leverett Rd), other infrastructure problems and extremely high taxes when eastern Massachusetts is benefitting so much from the clean Quabbin at such low cost. Eastern Mass should pay their fair share for clean water from the Quabbin so that the surrounding towns can thrive (and have clean water of their own.)

Jeff Weston, Shutesbury Planning Board
13 Kettle Hill Road; Shutesbury, MA 01072

As a member of the Shutesbury Planning Board, I first want to thank the Quabbin Watershed Stewards and Senator Jo Comerford for your deep and longstanding commitment to protecting the Quabbin Reservoir and the surrounding region.

I would like to bring everyone's attention to Eversource's proposed TW-11 Transmission Right-of-Way Reliability Program (TRRP) Project. Although there has never been a documented instance of a tree falling onto the 29.3-mile, 345-kV transmission line between the Northfield and Ludlow substations, Eversource proposes to dramatically expand the transmission corridor from its current width of 125–335 feet to 272–576 feet. This project will affect 3 of the 7 towns that make up the watershed of the Quabbin.

Rather than using a four-year right-of-way maintenance cycle—which reduces tree removal and habitat destruction, as practiced by Central Maine Power—Eversource proposes a much wider clearing intended to last approximately 40 years before major maintenance is needed. This approach would remove an estimated 278 acres of forest and permanently convert 371 acres to scrub-shrub habitat, including 34 acres of bordering vegetated wetlands and 44 acres of other wetlands, including isolated vegetated wetlands and riverfront areas.

Unlike National Grid and other utilities that use selective cutting, pruning, and directional pruning through Integrated Vegetation Management, Eversource does not propose these less destructive practices. Instead, it plans to clear-cut large sections of forest that include or border 21 vernal pools—critical breeding habitat for amphibians and other animals. The project also

proposes using large construction mats across approximately 12 acres of wetlands, including eight acres of bordering vegetated wetlands and four acres of other wetlands, which would significantly harm these environmentally sensitive areas.

The transmission corridor also crosses six Priority Habitat of Rare Species areas identified in the 15th Edition of the Massachusetts Natural Heritage Atlas. The proposal would permanently clear 111.6 acres of forest within these sensitive habitats, which support species such as the eastern box turtle, marbled salamander, wood turtle, and climbing fern.

The project presents significant concerns for soil and water resources as well. The corridor crosses 101 mapped soil units, including more than 40 soil types identified as having severe erosion potential. Increased erosion reduces the ability of rainfall to infiltrate the ground, limiting natural filtration by forest soils and reducing groundwater recharge. Healthy forests are essential to maintaining both water quality and water quantity of the Quabbin Reservoir.

This issue should be particularly important to the Quabbin Watershed Stewards because Shutesbury, Pelham, and Belchertown are three of the seven communities that help form the Quabbin Reservoir watershed. Forests within this region protect not only the Quabbin but also local aquifers—the sole drinking water source for many residents—and the Atkins Reservoir, which supplies the Town of Amherst, including the University of Massachusetts. Critical tributaries to the Atkins Reservoir, including Nurse Brook and Dean Brook, flow directly through areas proposed for extensive tree clearing.

Protecting the Quabbin begins with protecting the forests and soils that filter water, prevent erosion, and replenish groundwater. While it may be less expensive for Eversource to clear-cut a much wider corridor and reduce future maintenance costs, the environmental costs are substantial. Most importantly, there has never been a documented case of a tree striking this 29.3-mile transmission line under the existing right-of-way dimensions.

Given that history, it is difficult to justify expanding the corridor and removing 278 acres of forest, including 111.6 acres of permanent clearing within rare species habitat, while placing vernal pools, wetlands, streams, and watershed resources at unnecessary risk.

Eversource is a Fortune 500 publicly traded company with a market capitalization of approximately $26 billion. It has the financial resources to adopt more environmentally responsible practices. It could implement selective cutting, pruning, and directional pruning through Integrated Vegetation Management, as National Grid does, and maintain a more frequent maintenance cycle similar to Central Maine Power's four-year schedule. These proven alternatives would better balance electric reliability with environmental stewardship.

We should require Eversource to be a responsible steward of the lands through which its transmission lines pass. I respectfully ask for your support in protecting the Quabbin watershed, our forests, wetlands, wildlife, and the natural ecosystems that have developed here since the end of the last Ice Age approximately 14,000 years ago. Together, we can prevent the unnecessary environmental damage that this project would cause, and help to recharge and preserve the Quabbin Reservoir while continuing to maintain a reliable electric system.

Thank you.

Serge and Meredith Fedorovsky, Shutesbury residents
379 Leverett Rd, Shutesbury

Almost 40% of Shutesbury is state-owned land. Shutesbury residents pay one of the highest property taxes in the state, and we have almost no commercial tax base in our town. Many residents are struggling to make ends meet with soaring inflation and increasing school costs with lack of state funding for rural communities.
Our community helps protect the Quabbin reservoir yet receives woefully inadequate PILOT payments and cannot access the water for drinking despite many households in the area dealing with contaminated water due to PFAS.
We demand fair representation on the board and adequate financial support from the state to ensure PILOT payment equity with the greater Boston area.

Christine Heard, Citizen of Wendell, MA
149 Wendell Depot Rd.

Wendell's citizens highly value education. We spend a great amount of our tax dollars on our schools. Wendell is a town of about 900 people, including children. One third of our acreage belongs to the Commonwealth; another one third is protected in various ways including land overseen by the Quabbin This small population must support our town government, our roads and educate our children. We seek redress from the Commonwealth for the protection of our undeveloped forested acres provide to the Quabbin Reservoir, i.e., drinking water for Boston and many other towns east of us.

George Arvanitis, Town of Shutesbury - Finance Committee Member
15 Pelham Hill Rd, Shutesbury, MA 01072

The inequities of the current Payment in Lieu of Taxes system in our state were documented in a state auditor's report. The report noted that the reimbursement rates for many of the smaller communities such as Shutesbury and other communities surrounding the Quabbin Reservoir, are much lower than larger communities.

While we understand the need to protect the Quabbin Watershed, we are aware that a substantial portion of our town cannot be developed, limiting the economic growth needed to fund the ever-increasing costs of operating our town.

Setting aside equity concerns, the reimbursement rate for this lost tax revenue must be greater than the current rate, otherwise our town will not be able to maintain its current level of services.

Please consider increasing the reimbursement rate to reflect the true value of the land that is protecting this vital resource.

Thank you.

Catherine Hilton, Shutesbury Board of Health
5 Kinder Lane

Four score and eight years ago, four Western Massachusetts towns were extinguished to provide clean drinking water for the Boston Metropolitan area. Since the building of the Quabbin Reservoir, the Quabbin watershed towns have been treated as colonies, our precious resources diverted to the "mother country" without fair recompense. Fully a third of the area of my town, Shutesbury, is owned by the Commonwealth for the express purpose of protecting that precious resource – to which we ourselves do not have access – depriving the town of potential development and revenue. The payments in lieu of taxes that Shutesbury receives in return are laughably paltry – but nobody's laughing here, where real estate taxes climb every year and yet the town struggles to provide essential services, even while relying heavily on volunteers.

Adding insult to injury, while municipalities throughout the state impose mandatory watering bans because of serious ongoing multi-year drought, MWRA communities are reporting no watering bans. Do you imagine that the Quabbin is inexhaustible? Do these communities not have the same obligation to conserve water as every other town? Are the watershed towns, because they are located far from Boston , expected to make sacrifices for the common good while the MWRA towns in the rich suburbs are asked to do nothing?

We demand simple fairness and equity. We demand that our stewardship be appropriately valued and compensated. We demand that MWRA ratepayers pull their weight and pay the real cost of their water, and honor the value of that water by mandatory conservation.
It's 2026. We are no longer your colony.

Margaret Haight, Member, Hardwick Master Plan Steering Committee
198 Charity Hill Rd., Hardwick, MA 01037

Hardwick is finalizing an updated Master Plan, and the complete review we have done on natural resources, economic development, town services, land use, and more, reinforces how the Quabbin watershed and the over 60% of state-owned land in Hardwick hampers our options for financial sustainability. The Quabbin Equity legislation is a fairer approach.

Sharon Stevenson, Resident of Pelham MA
55 Buffam Rd, Pelham, MA 01002

As residents of the Quabbin watershed, we get shockingly little in return for the use of our land and water. Fair compensation must be established for the resources Boston takes from us.

Kelly Tyler, Town of Wendell
9 Morse Village Road, Wendell, MA 01379

The Town of Wendell strongly encourages the MWRA and the Commonwealth to support the Quabbin Watershed towns with fair compensation, and legislative efforts like the Quabbin Host Community Trust Fund and Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) which are more than fair requests for continued pristine water delivered to over 2.7 million people in the Boston area. I ask the Board to continue collaborating with local leaders to find a balanced, sustainable partnership that respects and appreciates the immense value they receive daily from the Quabbin Watershed Stewards.

Kristin DeBoer, Kestrel Land Trust
PO Box 1016 Amherst MA 01004

Secretary Rebecca Tepper, MWRA Board Chair and the MWRA Board of Directors:

The Quabbin area is a critically important forested region for wildlife, clean water, and climate resilience in Massachusetts. Since 1970, Kestrel Land Trust has been proactively working with landowners, towns, the state, and federal agencies, using private and public funding, to expand the protected forest around the Quabbin. Our vision is to connect the Quabbin to the Mount Holyoke Range and Mount Toby through interconnected permanently protected lands. In the last 20 years, Kestrel and our partners have protected over 12,000 acres of forest in this region.

Here is more information about this work:

https://www.kestreltrust.org/2000-acres-permanently-conserved-with-trustees-10-25/

https://www.kestreltrust.org/the-puzzle-of-forest-conservation/

Kestrel stands as an active and willing partner to continue this landscape-scale forest conservation work. Forests are the foundation of clean water, biodiversity, and clean air. Massachusetts should continue to invest in forest conservation around the Quabbin, as well as compensate towns with increased PILOT for providing these ecosystem services.

Thank you,
Kristin DeBoer
Executive Director
Kestrel Land Trust"

Jeff Weston, Member of the Shutesbury Planning Board
13 Kettle Hill Road; Shutesbury, MA 01072

This is the second public comment I am submitting as a member of the Shutesbury Planning Board to the MWRA Board of Directors. Thank you once again to the Board, the Quabbin Watershed Stewards, and Senator Joe Comerford for providing this opportunity to share our concerns.

As you know, the Quabbin Reservoir is one of the largest largely unfiltered public water supplies in the United States. It provides high-quality drinking water to approximately 3 million people in the Greater Boston area. New York City also relies on a largely unfiltered water supply, and since 1997 the New York City Department of Environmental Protection has protected or acquired more than 156,000 acres in the Catskill watersheds to safeguard that resource.

Shutesbury borders the Quabbin Reservoir and lies within its watershed. Our town is more than 90% forested, and those forests along with those in neighboring watershed communities are

essential to the Quabbin. Our towns help to clean, filter and protect the water that flows into the reservoir.

My comments today focus on Eversource's proposed transmission line project. The project would clear-cut approximately 278 acres of forest and permanently convert another 371 acres to scrub-shrub habitat across 11 towns. Three of those towns—Shutesbury, Pelham, and Belchertown—are within the Quabbin watershed.

Eversource proposes widening its existing 29.3-mile, 345-kV transmission corridor from 125–335 feet to 272–576 feet and replacing its current vegetation management approach with a single 40-year right-of-way cycle. Yet, according to Eversource, no tree has ever fallen onto this transmission line under the existing corridor width. That raises an important question: Is this project truly about safety, or is it primarily about reducing long-term operating costs?

Eversource is a Fortune 500, publicly traded company with a market capitalization of approximately $26 billion. A 40-year vegetation management cycle would almost certainly be less expensive than selective tree removal and pruning on a shorter cycle, such as the approach used by Central Maine Power as well as other energy companies including National Grid and Hydro-Quebec.

Ironically, Eversource's own website states that transmission corridors play a critical role in supporting native plants, wildlife, pollinators, and healthy ecosystems. It also says that the company uses integrated vegetation management (which includes selective cutting and pruning) to protect threatened and endangered species. However, at the June 4 public meeting in North Amherst, when I asked two Eversource arborists whether selective cutting and pruning could be used instead of straight forest cutting—at least in the environmentally sensitive portions of the WT-11 corridor—they did not answer.

The broader question before us is whether a project should proceed simply because it is economically advantageous for the utility. Should Eversource be permitted to remove an estimated 278 acres of forest and permanently convert 371 acres to scrub-shrub habitat, including 34 acres of bordering vegetated wetlands and 44 acres of other wetlands for economic reasons? Should it be allowed to adversely affect 21 protected vernal ponds that are within or in proximity to the project area and permanently clear 111.6 acres of Priority Habitat for Rare Species, affecting habitat for the eastern box turtle, marbled salamander, wood turtle, and climbing fern, because doing so reduces their long-term maintenance costs? Should it be allowed to undertake this project across more than 40 soil types, many classified as having severe erosion potential, in communities that help protect the Quabbin Reservoir?

Members of our community met with Eversource representatives on June 4 at the North Amherst Library. It should be noted that they did not even set up chairs for our meeting even though they were readily and easily available right behind their tables. Most of the attending members were over 60. Nor, did they help me to set up the chairs even though I am 69 and was clearly struggling with bilateral knee replacement and with additional leg damage that required scheduled surgery two weeks later.

Many of our questions went unanswered, including repeated questions about why selective cutting and pruning could not be used instead of dramatically widening the transmission corridor by straight cutting. The company representatives repeatedly stated that the wider corridor was necessary to prevent trees from falling onto the transmission line. Yet there has never been a documented instance of a tree falling onto this 29.3-mile transmission with the current corridor width.

Meaningful public participation is one of the fundamental purposes of the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). It provides an opportunity for affected communities to understand a proposed project, ask questions, share local knowledge and help identify ways to avoid or minimize environmental impacts. My experience at Eversource's June 4th meeting is strong evidence that this objective was not at all achieved.

Eversource spends tens of millions of dollars each year on transmission vegetation management across its service territory. A single, large-scale corridor clearing designed to last 40 years would substantially reduce those ongoing costs. While that may make economic sense for the company, it does not justify permanently altering hundreds of acres of environmentally sensitive land within the Quabbin watershed.

I urge the MWRA Board to carefully consider whether the long-term environmental costs to one of the nation's most important drinking water supply outweighs the financial benefits to a private utility. Eversource has the financial ability to supply dependable energy and also be good stewards to our precious environment. We should require them to do so.

Chip Jones, Snowmobile Assn of Massachusetts
379 Unity Ave, Athol, Ma 01331

On behalf of the Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts, I would like to reach out to the MWRA to advocate for more access to your properties in the winter. We're an organization of people from across the state, and growingly tourists from out of state, who appreciate nature and love our natural resources. Our respect for the outdoors is the cornerstone of our sport because it would not exist in its absence.

But due to the misconceptions about what might occur if we are allowed to increase trail mileage across the Quabbin watershed property, That access has been limited. Countless studies have been done that show the snowmobile and the grooming of snowmobile trails does absolutely no damage to the land nor does it cause any appreciable harm to the quality of water, because everything's frozen in the winter.

In reality, our groomed snowmobile trails create access for fire crews in the winter the protect the water that is so critical to the folks in the greater Boston area! Just recently the Belchertown Fire Department purchased a beautiful side by side UTV that has 4 wheel track capability to provide access to the woods with both an emergency medical Availability as well as a brush fire component! How better could your lands be protected if our organization could safely groom trails that we would share with the public.

Please consider this in your future decision making and we look forward to having talks with you in the near future.

Michael DeChiara, Shutesbury resident/ Planning Board
56 Pratt Corner Road Shutesbury, MA

I am a resident of Shutesbury, MA which borders on the western side of the Quabbin. It should be noted that both the water and a large part of the western watershed for the Quabbin fall within the town boundaries. There are three things I want to highlight for the Board.

First, the towns that border the Quabbin Reservoir are the stewards of the clean water that the MWRA uses to supply many eastern Mass. communities. However, given the inequitable PILOT formulas in use by the Commonwealth, our communities are essentially penalized for protecting the environment so there is clean water available to the MWRA. The MWRA Board must step up and support the Quabbin towns by advocating within the Administration and Legislature so that our towns receive PILOT that reflects the importance of this stewardship.

Related to this, DCR continues to aggressively cut trees within the Quabbin watershed. There is a great benefit in promoting intact ecosystems – both for climate resilience and the maintenance of clean water supply. The DCR forestland in Shutesbury filters the water flowing into the Quabbin and the trees/brush and ecosystems help protect the watershed in the face of increasing floods and droughts – both of which can negatively impact the water supply. I ask the MWRA to actively advocate for passive forest management practices to be implemented on DCR land in the Quabbin watershed rather than continue to allow the aggressive active management that is now in place.

Finally, representation matters. I understand that there are legislative efforts to expand the MWRA Board to include Quabbin town representatives; this would be good. Not only should the MWRA Board support this expansion so that we, the providers of the water, have a voice, but I would ask that in the interim, the MWRA Board actively explore ways to bring on Quabbin town representatives even without a statutory mandate. Without representation, the exploitation of western Mass. lands for the benefit of eastern Mass. communities with no financial or other recognition will continue.

David Gross, Pelham Conservation Commission
334 Daniel Shays Hwy., Pelham, MA

As a Conservation Commissioner member in the Town of Pelham, I regularly see the substantial areas of town that have been preserved for wildlife, for recreation, and for the protection of the waters of town. We supply the Quabbin reservoir as well as smaller reservoirs serving Belchertown and Amherst while we get no such gifts in kind. We, the Conservation Commission, take seriously our responsibility to protect our watershed. This diligence costs us in the form of lost land for development and the related loss of revenue to support the town. Our property taxes are high and, even with that, we are teetering on the brink. We may well need to close our school. We may no longer be able to maintain our roads and buildings, including our Meetinghouse that is in the National Registry of Historic Places and that has been in continuous use since 1743, the longest continuously used meetinghouse in the nation. We need the MWRA to step up and provide the Quabbin area towns with appropriate financial support to rectify the loss of so much of the fiber of our communities for the benefit of Eastern Massachusetts. We need representation on the MWRA board.

Daniel G Leahy, Wendell Resident and former chair of the Wendell Open Space Committee
71 Bullard Pasture Road, Wendell MA 01379

With the completion of the 2023 Town of Wendell Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP), we found that 63% of Wendell is permanently protected (13,067 acres). Another 10% (1,974 acres) has temporary protection under the Chapter 61 program. Since 2023 an additional 300 acres have been conserved. Wendell residents are deeply grateful to the landowners, State agencies and non-profit organizations, who, over the past 100 years, have helped create this land conservation legacy. The OSRP community survey indicated that a large majority of Wendell residents do not want to see more residential, commercial or industrial development. For many of us who live in Wendell, we see our town as an unpretentious sylvan paradise and we would like to see it remain so, long after our lifetimes.

What I am asking for, is that the MWRA provide increased financial payments to town governments who are located in the Quabbin watershed in order to compensate for the lost tax revenue to the Towns on the lands that are protected by DCR Water Supply Protection (fee lands or Watershed Preservation Restrictions). Increased payments will make the MWRA relationship with the watershed Towns more fair and equitable. In economics, the benefits humans receive from the natural environment—such as clean air, water purification, and biological diversity—are called ecosystem services. Quabbin watershed towns are providing ecosystem services in the form of clean water to approximately 3.2 million people in the eastern part of Massachusetts. We would like to be compensated and recognized for providing these invaluable ecosystem services. Please continue to work with Senator Comerford and Representative Saunders on increasing funding to towns as well as increasing town representation on the MWRA board. Thank you. Sincerely, Dan Leahy

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Robert L. Cole, Pelham Resident
234 Daniel Shays Hwy, Pelham, MA 01002

Cost of water to town residents, along with the possibility of pipeline to serve town residents, increased access to quabbin forest lands, hunting access year round to residents who abut Quabbin forest land.

Alan Dery, Retired Orange Home Owner
10 Hillside Terrace, Orange, MA 01364

I have been drinking bottled water for the last 20+ years because the water in Orange just reeks of Chlorine, all that nice clean water in the Quabbin and not a drop for the surrounding towns. Everything for the Boston area and nothing for Western Mass. and don't even mention roads which are the worst in all of New England. Our elected leaders have totally failed Western Mass.

Ruth Rinard, Citizen of Town of Pelham
208 Amherst Road, Pelham, MA 01002

The town of Pelham as well as other rural communities surrounding the Quabbin have for years been good stewards of the the watershed. This has enabled residents in Eastern Massachusetts to enjoy good, clean, abundant water. But this has come at the expense of towns like Pelham. It has reduced our tax base and the low rate of funds to compensate if this is too low. This has has

made it difficult to fund essential town responsibilities including educating our children through maintaining our school which is the center of community life in this town. Others towns surrounding the Quabbin have similar issues. I urge you to increase amount of the payment in lieu of taxes so necessary services for all citizens in Maasachusets can be maintained including services in small rural communities. I further urge you to do more to educate towns in the eastern part of the state who use Qu abbin water to increase their understanding of what it takes to preserve this precious resource including mandatory water use bans. We do not get to use this water yet we help preserve it and we are not fairly compensated for that. This does not seem just or fair.

Nancy Dill, Resident of Shutesbury
120 Cushman Rd, Amherst, MA 01002

Thank you for traveling to our area to look into this matter, it is greatly appreciated. I write from the perspective of both someone who benefited from the Quabbin and someone who is a homeowner in one of the towns which for close to 100 years has underwritten the costs of providing that water. As you know, our tax rate here is 16.21%. I have lived in seven Greater Boston communities in my life - their tax rates range from 6.67% to 11.51%. It is not a far reach to assume our tax rates are among the highest in the state, in part, because we receive little in value from 1/3 of our land.

When I think of the Shutesbury land which was taken for the Quabbin, I think in terms of opportunity costs to our community. What could that land have provided in terms of local revenues had it not been forcibly acquired? I know the region knew high levels of tourism and hosted small industries before the Quabbin was built. Might we have received the benefit of commercial, as well as residential, taxes over many years? What is the current and future cost of this loss?

I would like to add my voice to other local community members to request you do your utmost to provide fair compensation to local towns so we are not shouldering the costs of Greater Boston communities such as those I have been fortunate to live in. Those towns are much more capable than we are of paying the actual costs of their water. Whether the additional funding would lower my tax rate or allow my town to provide additional services, either would be a welcome blessing. While ideally, the historic subsidizing would also be corrected, even a change for the future would be very welcome.

To give you some context for this letter, I am a woman in her late 60s who still works full time and expects to have to continue to delay my retirement, in large part because of property taxes -

current and future. I love my town but have come to hate the challenges our town leaders face because of the combination of limited revenue, rising costs and too many necessary expenses. While all towns face these challenges today, the forced use of 1/3 of our town withour fair compensation leaves our leaders and residents significantly overburdened.

Thank you again for doing what you can to end Central Massachusetts rural towns subsidizing the real water costs for Greater Boston.

Sarah & William Greenleaf, Wendell Residents
#95 West Street, Wendell, MA 01379

We live in Wendell, which has been very much affected by the taking of Water from our Aquifers to send to people in the Boston area. We protect the Water Sources and Aquifers in Wendell that send their Water to the Quabbin Reservoir, and we receive no benefits from the State for doing this. Our Whetstone Watershed provides Water to many Aquifers, including the Quabbin Reservoir, and it is only right that the contributions from Wendell be valued as well as and with the Conservation Efforts made by other surrounding towns. Thank You.

Cameron Dunbar, Town of New Salem
36 N Main St., New Salem, MA 01355

I have been a steward of Boston's water supply for my entire life. Generations before me have also done so. It is no secret our towns are left holding the bag for the Metropolitan water system. My request is to be treated fairly and equitably for what we provide to communities in the MWRA distribution network. Funds which are provided by ratepayers should be equitably distributed back to the communities. It should not fall to me to tell you this; but here we are. It was never so true to me until I was standing at the ballot box deciding whether to fund an override which would eliminate five teachers from the elementary school my children will someday attend, or fund a shower in the fire station which I need to use to reduce my chances of occupational cancer which would leave those children without a father. Accordingly, I call on the MWRA board and all interested parties to make the correct choice and value the contributions of the communities which host your water supply.

Rcd 7/10/16

July 10, 2016

My name is Jeff Weston and I am a member of the Planning Board of Shutesbury. Thank you for providing this opportunity.

As you know, the Quabbin Reservoir is one of the largest largely unfiltered public water supplies in the United States. New York City also relies on a largely unfiltered water supply, and they have protected 156,000 acres in their watersheds to safeguard that resource.

I believe that we should protect our watersheds in the same way. Shutesbury borders the Quabbin Reservoir and we make up part of its watershed. Our town is more than 90% forested, and those forests along with those in neighboring watershed communities are essential to the Quabbin. The forests of our towns help to clean, filter and protect the water that flows into the reservoir.

My comments today focus on Eversource's proposed transmission line project and its potential effect on Quabbin's watershed. Their project would clear-cut approximately 278 acres of forest and permanently convert 371 acres to scrub-shrub habitat across 11 towns including three towns that make up the watershed of the Quabbin: Shutesbury, Pelham and Belchertown.

The proposed project crosses over 40 soil types where the erosion potential is described as severe and where erosion is likely. When erosion is severe, quickly running water will not have time to be absorbed into our soil, be both filtered and cleaned by our trees and move into the Quabbin. Also, our own aquifers will not be sufficiently replenished because the quick moving water will not have times to be absorbed. It should be noted that our trees also filter and clean the water of the Atkin's Reservoir, which services that town of Amherst including the University of Mass.

Eversource proposes widening its existing 29.3-mile, 345-kV transmission corridor to a width between 272–576 feet and replacing its current vegetation management approach with a single 40-year right-of-way cycle. Yet, no tree-caused outages have impacted their line number 354 which makes up 28 of the project's 29.3 miles. There have been two trees that have impacted the other 1.3 miles lines in their project, but there has been no confirmation from Eversource that those two trees caused significant customer impact or damage. We do not know.

With the current corridor width between 125-335 feet having such a high rate of dependability, I am wondering if the Eversource plan is truly about safety as they proclaim, or is it primarily about reducing long-term operating costs at the expense of our environment and at the expense of the Quabbin watershed.

Eversource is a Fortune 500, publicly traded company with a market capitalization of approximately $26 billion. A 40-year vegetation management cycle would almost certainly be less expensive than selective tree removal and pruning on a shorter cycle, such as the approach used by Central Maine Power as well as other energy companies including National Grid and Hydro-Quebec.

Members of our community met with Eversource representatives on June 4 at the North Amherst Library. Many of our questions went unanswered, including repeated questions about why selective cutting and pruning could not be used at least on the environmentally sensitive portions of the WT-11 corridor instead of dramatically widening the transmission corridor by environmentally devastating straight cutting.

Given that the dependability of the WT-11 transmission line has been very high with the current width, the broader question before us is whether a project should proceed simply because it is economically advantageous for the utility? Should Eversource be permitted to remove an estimated 278 acres of forested land, and permanently convert 371 acres to scrub-shrub habitat, including 34 acres of bordering vegetated wetlands and 44 acres of other wetlands for economic reasons? Should it be allowed to adversely affect 21 protected vernal ponds that are within or in proximity to the project area and permanently clear 111.6 acres of Priority Habitat for Rare Species so they can reduce their long-term maintenance costs?

Eversource spends tens of millions of dollars each year on transmission vegetation management across its service territory. A single, large-scale corridor clearing designed to last 40 years might reduce those ongoing costs. While that may make economic sense, it does not justify permanently altering hundreds of acres of environmentally sensitive land within the Quabbin watershed.

I urge the MWRA Board to carefully consider whether the financial benefits to Eversource, a utility with a capitalization of 26 billion, is worth the long-term environmental costs and permanent damage to our forests, wetlands, priority habitat for endangered species and to the Quabbin. Eversource has the financial ability to do their transmission line maintenance every four years (like Central Maine Power) and practice a highly selective tree management system (which involves selective cutting and pruning) used by National Grid. Eversource is financially able to supply dependable energy and also be a good steward to our precious and irreplaceable environment. We should require them to do so.

Thank you.

Jeff Weston
Shutesbury Planning Board
jwest5678@yahoo.com
(413) 345-0651

Rcd. 7/10/26

TOWN OF ATHOL

A PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING THE HISTORIC SACRIFICE AND ONGOING STEWARDSHIP OF THE QUABBIN RESERVOIR WATERSHED COMMUNITIES

WHEREAS, in 1938 the Commonwealth of Massachusetts disincorporated and flooded the towns of Dana, Prescott, Greenwich, and Enfield in the Swift River Valley to enable the creation of the Quabbin Reservoir, ensuring a reliable supply of clean drinking water to support the growth and prosperity of eastern Massachusetts; and

WHEREAS, the creation of the Quabbin Reservoir required the dismantling of more than 1,100 structures, including more than 650 homes; the relocation of more than 7,600 graves from 34 cemeteries; the termination of established north–south rail service and the abandonment of planned east–west rail expansion; and the closure of numerous farms, businesses, and industries that had sustained the Swift River Valley communities; and

WHEREAS, families who had lived in the Swift River Valley for generations were compelled to leave their homes, lands, and livelihoods so that the reservoir could be constructed; and

WHEREAS, today the 119,940-acre Quabbin Reservoir watershed, comprising both publicly and privately held lands, is stewarded by Belchertown and eleven other watershed communities that collectively safeguard a vital 412-billion-gallon drinking water supply; and

WHEREAS, Belchertown and the other watershed towns work diligently to ensure compliance with state and federal water protection regulations in order to preserve the exceptional purity of the Quabbin Reservoir; and

WHEREAS, land taken and incorporated into the construction and protection of the Quabbin Reservoir effectively eliminated key trade routes and rail connections from Athol to agricultural and commercial resources to its south thus limiting the town's economic development and tax base; and

WHEREAS, Athol and all of the other watershed communities continue to play a vital role in protecting the water supply that serves approximately 2.7 million residents of eastern Massachusetts;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Athol stands with the other Quabbin watershed communities in respectfully requesting more equitable recognition and recompense for the region's historic sacrifice and its continuing service in protecting the Commonwealth's drinking water supply; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Athol and the other watershed communities jointly seek:

i. Increased regional representation on the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority Board of Directors and Board of Advisors;
ii. The establishment of a Quabbin Community Trust Fund to assist watershed towns in meeting municipal needs, including potable water access and public safety services; and
iii. A reconfiguration of the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) structure to more fully recognize the economic and environmental value provided by Athol and the other Quabbin watershed communities through their stewardship of the pristine and world-class Quabbin Reservoir.

VOTED this 7th day of July, 2026:

William B. Chiasson, Chair

Marc B. Maxwell, Vice Chair

Mitchell R. Grosky, Member

Russell L. Raymond, Member

Alex P. Blake, Member

FY26

Town	Non-Quabbin Acres (Taxed)	Property Tax Revenue	Property Tax Revenue/Acre	Quabbin Acres (PILOTed)	PILOT Revenue	PILOT Revenue/Acre	Additional Tax Revenue if Quabbin Acres were Developed & Taxed	PILOT as Percentage of Potential Tax Value
Belchertown	29,804	$38,774,456	$1,301	3,860 (12% of town)	$342,216 (0.5% of budget)	$89	$5,021,860	6.8%
Hardwick	19,707	$5,276,086	$268	4,869 (20% of town)	$156,015 (2.2% of budget)	$32	$1,304,892	11.9%
New Salem	3,460	$2,653,756	$767	34,044 (91% of town)	$722,075 (20% of budget)	$21	$26,111,748	2.8%
Pelham	9,010	$5,319,377	$590	7,054 (44% of town)	$376,183 (6% of budget)	$53	$4,161,860	9.0%
Petersham	22,270	$3,698,881	$166	12,418 (36% of town)	$500,028 (25% of budget)	$40	$2,061,388	24.3%
Shutesbury	12,045	$6,139,864	$510	4,979 (30% of town)	$299,392 (4% of budget)	$60	$2,539,290	11.8%
Ware	16,860	$18,652,290	$1,106	8,710 (34% of town)	$360,842 (1.9% of budget)	$41	$9,633,260	3.7%

Other State-Own-Land PILOTs for Comparison:

State average PILOT: $130/acre Hanover: $5,027/acre

Haverhill: $8,545/acre Norwell: $12,147/acre

PILOT & Quabbin acre data from https://dls-gw.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=BLA.DCR_PILOT

Property tax data from https://dls-gw.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=Analysis.TaxImpactCalc

Note: this only includes the 7 Quabbin host communities; it does not include the other 22 towns with Quabbin reserve land.

Context note: In FY25, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority spent a total of $32.1 million, or 3.6% of FY25 budget of $899.9 million, on its PILOT obligations (https://www.mwra.com/media/file/032124-finance). Of that, $8.5 million, or 0.94%, was paid to the 29 Quabbin watershed towns specifically, and $2.7 million, or just 0.3%, went to the 7 Quabbin host communities (https://dls-gw.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=BLA.DCR_PILOT).

Compiled by Matteo Pangallo (landuseclerk@shutesbury.org), March 2026; updated July 2026.

Rcd 7/10/26

STAFF SUMMARY

TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Stephen Estes-Smarigiasi, Executive Director
DATE: July 10, 2026
SUBJECT: Quabbin Maintenance Building
Design and Engineering Services During Construction
The Robinson Green Beretta Corporation
Contract 7677, Amendment 4

COMMITTEE: Water Policy & Oversight

____ INFORMATION
_X_ VOTE

Brian L. Kubaska, P.E., Chief Engineer
Kathleen Cullen, P.E., Senior Program Manager
Geetha Mathiyalakan, P.E., Program Manager
Preparer/Title

Kathleen M. Murtagh, P.E.
Chief Operating Officer

RECOMMENDATION:

To authorize the Executive Director, on behalf of the Authority, to approve Amendment 4 to Contract 7677, Quabbin Maintenance Building Design and Engineering Services During Construction, with The Robinson Green Beretta Corporation, increasing the contract amount by $246,000, from $1,643,443.41 to $1,889,443.41, and extending the contract term by 33 months from September 17, 2026 to June 17, 2029.

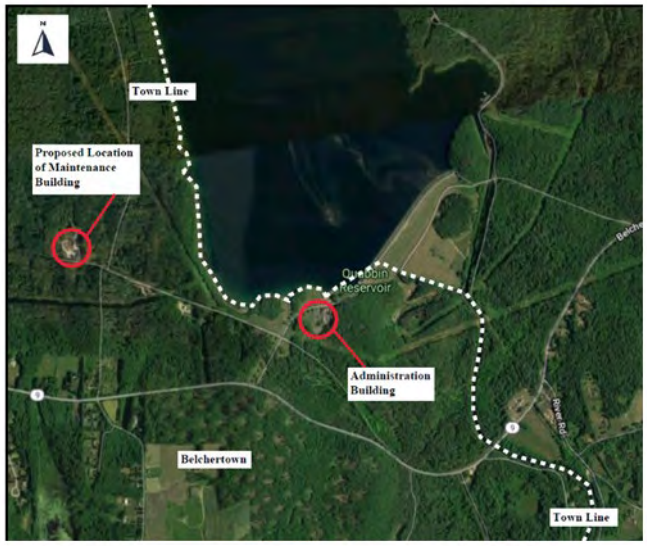
Further, to authorize the Executive Director to approve additional amendments as may be needed to Contract 7677 in an amount not-to-exceed the aggregate of $325,000 and 12 months in accordance with the Management Policies and Procedures of the Board of Directors.

DISCUSSION:

On March 17, 2021, the Board approved the award of Contract 7677 to The Robinson Green Beretta Corporation (RGB) to provide design and engineering services during construction for a new Quabbin Maintenance Building.

The proposed Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Quabbin Maintenance Building will be a pre-engineered metal garage, located just north of two existing DCR buildings at the partially cleared site of 251 Blue Meadow Road, Belchertown. The proposed location is approximately 0.7 miles west of the Blue Meadow Road and Winsor Dam Road intersection near the southern end of the Quabbin Reservoir.

The proposed new maintenance building will provide 8,800 square feet of floor area for vehicle fleet maintenance staff and equipment. The project includes construction of a separate water building with 800 square feet of floor area to connect with the existing water supply well and provide potable water treatment and fire protection systems for the new maintenance building.



The new maintenance building includes office space, three maintenance bays for oversized vehicles and heavy equipment, and one vehicle wash bay. The proposed site work includes installation of heavy-duty pavement for equipment parking, proposed plumbing site work for the wash bay area, including oil water separator tanks and tight tanks with alarms, a connection to the existing onsite wastewater septic system and new utilities, including telecommunications.

Prior Amendments

Amendment 1 was issued for additional time and effort for evaluation, permitting, and design to add a second water supply source, as well as preparing a design that accommodates the more difficult site conditions than anticipated, including high ground water, ledge and slope conditions. Amendments 2 and 3 granted additional time at no additional cost to finalize the design documents and complete bidding, due to the extensive number of filed sub bids and a delay due to the MWRA's procurement portal upgrade. Prior amendment staff summaries noted that a future amendment to extend the contract to match the construction schedule and add escalation would be necessary.

This Amendment

Incorporate Building Code Changes to Chiller System $21,000

Additional level of effort is required to incorporate revisions to the chiller system design resulting from recent changes in the Massachusetts Building Code, coordinate the construction documents with these changes, and update the construction cost estimate.

Extend the Contract Time by 33 Months $225,000

Contract 7677 expires on September 17, 2026. Bid documents with seven categories of filed sub-bids were advertised on June 20, 2026. The construction Notice to Proceed is anticipated by October 2026, with Substantial Completion expected in early summer of 2028. Proposed Amendment 4 will extend the contract term by 33 months to June 17, 2029, allowing the consultant to complete the Engineering Services During Construction and limited Resident Engineering Services. The additional cost includes labor escalation and increased administration effort needed to continue RGB's services through the 18-month construction duration and the 12-month warranty period.

CONTRACT SUMMARY:

	AMOUNT	TIME	DATED
Original Contract	$1,318,277.94	43 months	5/20/2021
Amendment 1*	$325,165.47	6 months	1/2/2025
Amendment 2*	$0	6 months	6/11/2025
Amendment 3	$0	9 months	2/5/2026
Amendment 4	$246,000.00	33 months	Pending
Amended Contract	$1,889,443.41	97 months	

* Approved under delegated authority

BUDGET/FISCAL IMPACTS:

The FY27 CIP includes $1,643,487 for Contract 7677. Including this amendment for $246,000, the adjusted contract total will be $1,889,443 or $245,956 over the CIP amount. This amount will be absorbed within the five-year CIP spending cap.

MBE/WBE PARTICIPATION:

There were no MBE/WBE participation requirements established for this contract due to the limited opportunities for subcontracting.

STAFF SUMMARY

TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Stephen Estes-Smargiassi, Executive Director
DATE: July 10, 2026
SUBJECT: Climate Mitigation Trust Projects Update

COMMITTEE: Administration, Finance and Audit

__X__ INFORMATION
_____ VOTE

Rebecca Weidman, Deputy Chief Operating Officer
Kristen Patneaude, Manager, Energy
Preparer/Title

Kathleen M. Murtagh, P.E.
Chief Operating Officer

MWRA has a long-standing and successful commitment to energy savings initiatives with attention to fiscal responsibility, environmental protection, and greenhouse gas emissions reduction and mitigation. MWRA is continuously expanding these sustainable and cost-effective efforts. This staff summary provides an update on MWRA's decarbonization efforts funded through the Climate Protection and Mitigation Expendable Trust Best Value Grant.

RECOMMENDATION:

For information only.

DISCUSSION:

To reduce costs and reliance on the use of fossil fuels as an energy source, MWRA continues to actively pursue renewable installations and decarbonization efforts at its facilities. In October 2024, MassDEP awarded MWRA a $20 million Climate Mitigation Trust Grant to fund several decarbonization projects that will expedite their implementation. The bulk of this funding is expected to be used toward construction costs for new renewable energy infrastructure, including canopy and roof mounted solar arrays at Deer Island, a ground mounted solar array at the Norumbega Covered Water Storage Facility, and replacement of a wind turbine at Deer Island. Funding will also be used to offset costs for several building electrification projects. Updates on these efforts are provided below.

Wind

As previously reported, on May 29, 2023, there was a catastrophic failure of Wind Turbine 1 at Deer Island, resulting in significant, irreparable damage to the turbine. Through a Deer Island task order contract, it was determined that an in-kind replacement of a new tower and refurbished generator (and all related equipment in the wind turbine nacelle) would be the most cost effective and time efficient solution. Testing was performed on the foundation anchors, which confirmed the foundation is structurally sound and can be reused with the new tower and nacelle, allowing for the replacement of the turbine without new permitting requirements.

As approved at the December 10, 2025 Board meeting, Contract 8148 was awarded to O'Conner Corporation to furnish and install a completely refurbished wind turbine nacelle, new power cables, and a new tower for a total contract cost of $3.82 million and a term of 420 days. All major equipment submittals have been reviewed and approved and the turbine tower and nacelle are currently in the manufacturing process phase (see photo on right). The equipment installation and testing are expected to occur by the end of the year.



Wind Turbine Nacelle Assembly in Progress

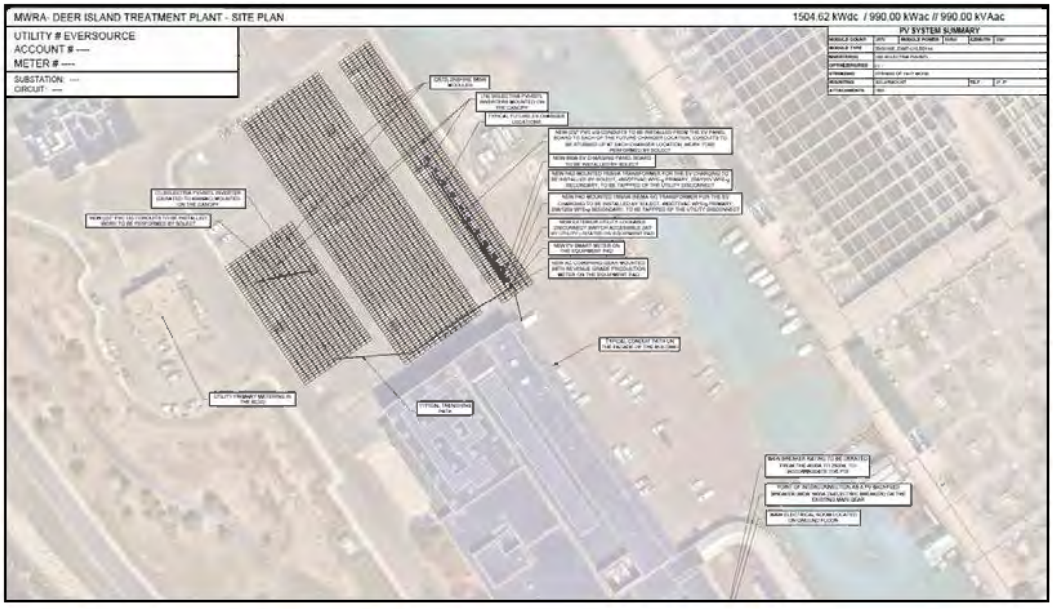
Solar

MWRA executed a Letter of Intent with Solect Energy Development, LLC (Solect) through the PowerOptions solar program in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 164, §137, regarding a solar canopy and roof-mounted system at Deer Island. One of the challenges with the installation of parking lot canopies on Deer Island is determining the existence, depth, and composition of existing subsurface structures. Existing subsurface geotechnical borings and site plans were supplemented with ground penetrating radar, and exploratory test pits (see photos below) to determine the footprint of a potential parking canopy.


Test Pits in Deer Island Parking Lot 1

The initial solar canopy indicative design work (exploring and developing preliminary ideas and concepts) and preliminary geotechnical and structural evaluations started in 2025 and are currently being finalized. The proposed solar canopy layout is shown below.

Subject to acceptable pricing, terms, and conditions, staff anticipate the presentation of a solar canopy project proposal for Board consideration in early Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27). Staff also plan on developing a roof mounted system on the Deer Island Residuals Operations and Odor Control Facility after the replacement of the existing roofing system, later in FY27.



Proposed Deer Island Parking Lot 1 Solar Canopy Layout

An Act Providing for Improvements to the Metropolitan Water Supply System was signed by the Governor in August 2024 to expand the use of the Norumbega Covered Storage Facility land area to include solar photovoltaic technology. MWRA executed a second Letter of Intent with Solect in June 2026 to assist staff with assessing the potential interconnection challenges for a solar installation on top of the Norumbega Covered Storage Facility. The utility (Eversource) hosting capacity maps show distributed generation capacity at the nearby distribution substations that is lower than the potential project size for the site. Interconnection limitations or potential distribution system upgrade needs are critical information that will influence the scope of this project going forward. The timeline for completion of an interconnection study is pending.

Building Electrification

The greening of the regional electric grid underlines the importance of electrifying facilities throughout the water and wastewater system. As part of MWRA's comprehensive energy strategy, staff continue to explore opportunities to reduce MWRA's reliance on higher carbon intensive fuels, such as heating oil and natural gas, to reduce MWRA's carbon emissions.

MWRA recently replaced the 30-year-old oil-fired heating system at the Norumbega Headquarters building with a new hyper-heating heat pump system, which is designed to provide efficient heating and cooling. The contract was executed in November 2024, and work was substantially completed in March 2025. This project is expected to save approximately 2,877 gallons of fuel oil per year, with a Social Cost of Carbon (SCC)[1] benefit of $3,200 annually. The project cost of $163,961 was reimbursed from the Climate Mitigation Trust Grant in June 2025.

Staff are also working with MWRA's utility partners, National Grid and Eversource, performing heat pump specific audits at other facilities that utilize fossil fuels for heating. MWRA continues

[1] To ensure that energy saving and greenhouse gas emission reducing efforts are considered in capital planning, MWRA has adopted a SCC of $125 per metric ton of carbon dioxide for use when evaluating the life cycle costs of new projects. The SCC is an estimate of the economic costs, or damages, of emitting one additional metric ton of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

to move forward with the audit recommendations as they are received. The following heat pump projects are currently in progress.

- **Spring Street Water Pumping Station** – Installation of one three-ton capacity air source heat pump and two variable refrigerant flow heat pumps (5.75 and 15 tons) serving six interior units that will heat and cool the building. The addition of cooling for this building will reduce the need for dehumidification in the summer. This project was completed in May 2026 and is expected to save approximately 8,430 therms of natural gas per year, with a SCC benefit of $5,575 annually.

- **Belmont Water Pumping Station** - Installation of two air source heat pumps with a total capacity of 16 tons feeding four interior units that will heat and cool the interior of the pump station. The addition of cooling for this building will reduce the need for dehumidification in the summer. This project will be completed in early FY27 and is expected to save approximately 4,400 therms of natural gas per year, with a SCC benefit of about $2,000 annually.

- **Houghs Neck Wastewater Pump Station** – Installation of one three-ton capacity air source heat pump serving three indoor units. This project is expected to start in late June/early July 2026 and save approximately 745 therms of natural gas per year, with a SCC benefit of about $500 annually.

- **Newton Street Water Pumping Station** – Installation of one variable refrigerant flow heat pump with a capacity of 16 tons serving six indoor units in the pump station. The addition of cooling for this building will reduce the need for dehumidification in the summer. This project will begin in late August/early September 2026 after completion of a roofing project at the pumping station and is expected to save approximately 1,470 gallons of diesel fuel per year, with an annual SCC benefit of about $1,090.

- **Braintree-Weymouth Wastewater Pump Station** – Installation of one 30-ton capacity air to water source heat pump serving the dry side of the facility. This project may begin in early FY27 and is expected to save approximately 6,617 gallons of diesel fuel per year, with an annual SCC benefit of about $3,888.

- **Quincy Wastewater Pump Station** – Installation of one 20-ton capacity variable refrigerant flow heat pump serving three interior units. This project may begin in early FY27 and is expected to save approximately 2,284 therms of natural gas per year, with an annual SCC benefit of about $1,525.

- **Squantum Wastewater Pump Station** – Installation of four air source heat pumps – 20-ton, 16-ton, five-ton and ¾-ton capacity serving four internal units. This project may begin in early FY27 and is expected to save approximately 3,595 therms of natural gas per year, with a SCC benefit of $2,400 annually.

With support from utility partners National Grid and Eversource, scoping studies were recently completed at the Caruso Pump Station and the Intermediate Pump Station to identify potential opportunities to improve facility efficiencies. Through the U.S. Department of Energy's Onsite Energy Technical Assistance Partnership (TAP), a multi-technology screening analysis is being conducted for the Clinton Wastewater Treatment Plant to identity energy savings and

decarbonization opportunities. Staff will continue to assess recommended measures at these facilities, including the potential for wastewater energy recovery heat pump systems.

In addition to these projects currently underway, all new facility construction, renovation, HVAC replacements or upgrades include a heat pump evaluation, and MWRA also examines avenues for both energy efficiency improvements and electrification. In 2024, MWRA updated its decarbonization standard procedures that serve to codify MWRA's carbon reduction activities, which have been developed over time, providing a roadmap for MWRA staff to ensure that these efforts are embedded into all of MWRA's operations and facility construction projects in a cost-effective manner. The decarbonization standard procedures are updated periodically to incorporate emerging state decarbonization mandates and energy efficiency priorities, including the developing focus on embodied carbon reduction in major construction projects.

BUDGET/FISCAL IMPACTS:

The FY27 Draft Final CIP includes $29.4 million in available funds for Alternative Energy Initiatives. MWRA will be responsible for any project costs that exceed the $20.0 million Climate Mitigation Trust Grant.

STAFF SUMMARY

TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Stephen Estes-Smargiassi, Executive Director
DATE: July 10, 2026
SUBJECT: Progress on Emissions Reduction and 2024 Greenhouse Gas Inventory

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COMMITTEE: Administration, Finance and Audit

__X__ INFORMATION
____ VOTE

Malcolm Ragan, Project Manager, Planning
Michael O'Keefe, Senior Program Manager, Planning
Preparer/Title

Kathleen M. Murtagh, P.E.
Chief Operating Officer

RECOMMENDATION:

For information only.

DISCUSSION:

MWRA has a long standing and successful commitment to energy savings and decarbonization. In addition to its primary responsibility of protecting public health and waterways by providing safe drinking water and high quality wastewater treatment to member communities, MWRA continues to focus on reducing its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and mitigating the impacts of climate change. The Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources recognized this commitment several times over the last twenty years, most recently in 2023, with MWRA's selection for the Commonwealth's Leading by Example Award, which recognizes public entities that have implemented policies and programs resulting in significant and measurable environmental and energy benefits.

Over nearly two decades, MWRA's commitment to innovative energy efficiency improvements, renewable energy development, and electrification has yielded considerable reductions in GHG emissions. Recently, MWRA has been guided by the Commonwealth's Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2050, which commits the State to net zero GHG emissions (85% reduction) by 2050, with intermediate targets of 33% and 50% reductions by 2025 and 2030, respectively. Since 2006, MWRA has reduced our emissions by 39%.[1] These efforts have been launched and completed without compromising MWRA's core mission as well as ensuring fiscal responsibility to ratepayers to manage costs.

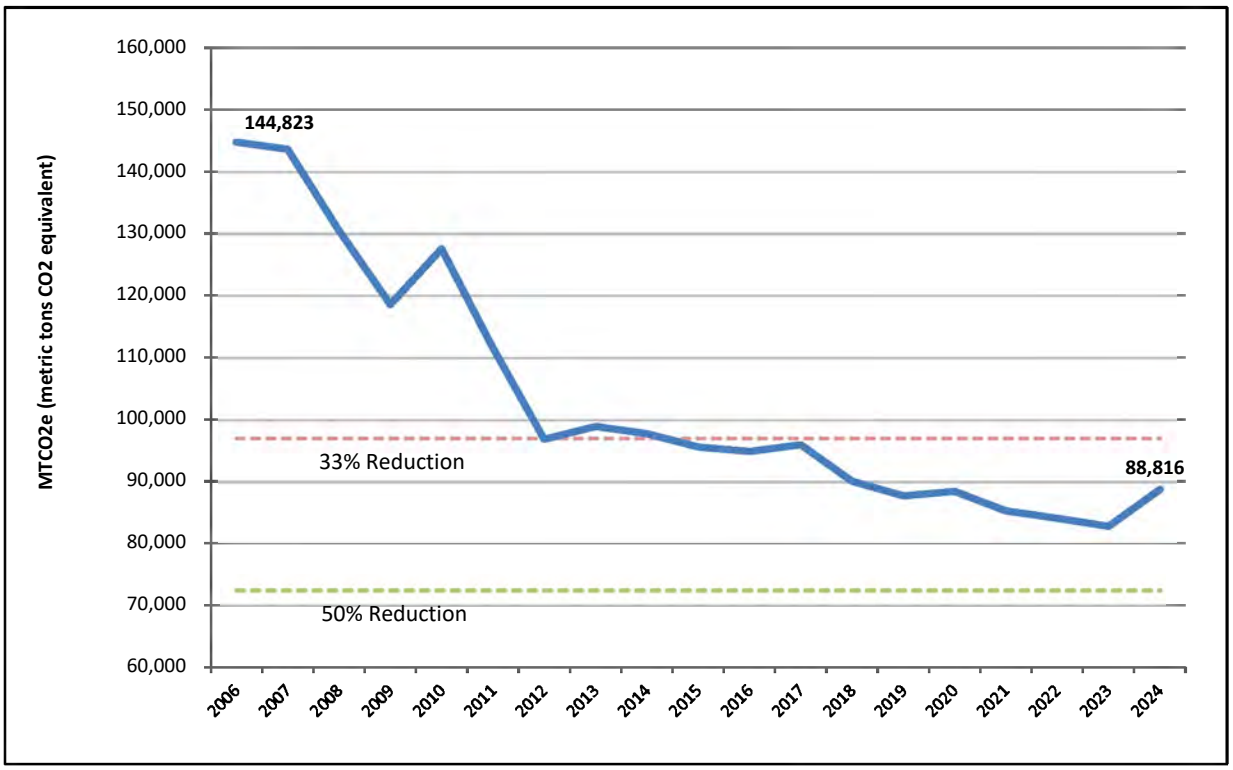
MWRA continues to pursue projects that reduce its GHG emissions. This staff summary provides an overview of MWRA's 2024 GHG Inventory Update, which is available on MWRA.com, and plans for further reducing emissions.

[1] The earliest year that MWRA has complete, detailed, and reliable data on GHG emissions is 2006, which serves as the base year for emissions reductions.

Progress in Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Since 2006, MWRA's annual GHG emissions[2] have dropped 39%, an overall decrease of over 56,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide (CO_2) equivalent[3] ($MTCO_2e$), comparable to taking over 13,000 passenger vehicles off the road per year. Figure 1 shows this decline alongside the interim Commonwealth emission reduction benchmarks of 33% and 50% by 2025 and 2030, respectively. While MWRA is below State benchmarks, total emissions increased in 2024 by 7% due to circumstances beyond MWRA's control, including a rise in fuel oil demand for boilers at the Deer Island Treatment Plant (DITP).

Figure 1: MWRA GHG Emissions, Metric Tons of CO_2 Equivalents (2006 – 2024)



When interpreting these reductions and annual variations, such as the increase in 2024, it is important to note that MWRA's energy demand is influenced by many factors including precipitation, temperature, customer demand, and the thermal content of digester gas. This is especially the case for the wastewater system, which accounts for nearly 90% of MWRA's emissions due to energy intensive processes, such as pumping, oxygen generation, and odor control. Specifically, wet weather events increase the treatment plant flows due to increased inflow and infiltration and flow from combined sewers in some MWRA communities. When there are high flows, more wastewater needs to be pumped throughout MWRA's collection system and processed at the DITP, resulting in increased electricity purchases and associated emissions.

[2] MWRA emissions include "scope one" (*i.e.,* direct emissions from onsite energy use and process emissions from MWRA operations) and "scope two" (*i.e.*, indirect emissions associated with the consumption of energy at MWRA facilities, i.e., emissions at utility plants from electricity generation). "Scope 3" (*i.e.,* indirect emissions, not included in scope 2, from facilities or operations not owned or controlled by MWRA) are not included in MWRA's total emissions, as directed by most reporting protocols.

[3] Carbon dioxide equivalent is a measure that allows the comparison of the emissions of other greenhouse gases, such as methane and nitrous oxide, relative to one unit of CO_2.

Similarly, cold winters require more electricity, fuel oil, or natural gas to maintain safe temperatures for staff and operational equipment.

2024 Greenhouse Gas Inventory[4]

As mentioned above, through 2024, MWRA has reduced GHG emissions by 39% compared to the baseline of 2006. However, there was a 7% increase in 2024 emissions due to a slight increase in electricity use and large increases in heating demand.

Emissions Sources

In 2024, as shown in Table 1 below, the major sources of MWRA's GHG emissions included:

- Electricity: 42.0%
- Natural gas: 21.5%
- Process and fugitive: 18.3%
- Diesel, fuel oil, and propane: 16.2%
- Vehicle fleet: 2.0%

Table 1: MWRA GHG Emission Sources, 2006-2024

$MTCO_2e$ by Source	**2006 (Baseline)**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**
Electricity	87,590	33,094	40,529	38,600	36,334	36,894	37,281
Natural Gas	20,964	17,729	17,483	16,504	17,137	17,345	19,068
Process & Fugitive	18,886	17,991	18,038	16,793	17,898	17,489	16,283
Diesel/Fuel Oil/Propane	15,243	16,959	10,647	11,472	10,985	9,532	14,414
Fleet	2,142	1,990	1,804	1,982	1,806	1,617	1,770
Total	**144,823**	**87,763**	**88,500**	**85,350**	**84,160**	**82,878**	**88,816**

Electricity

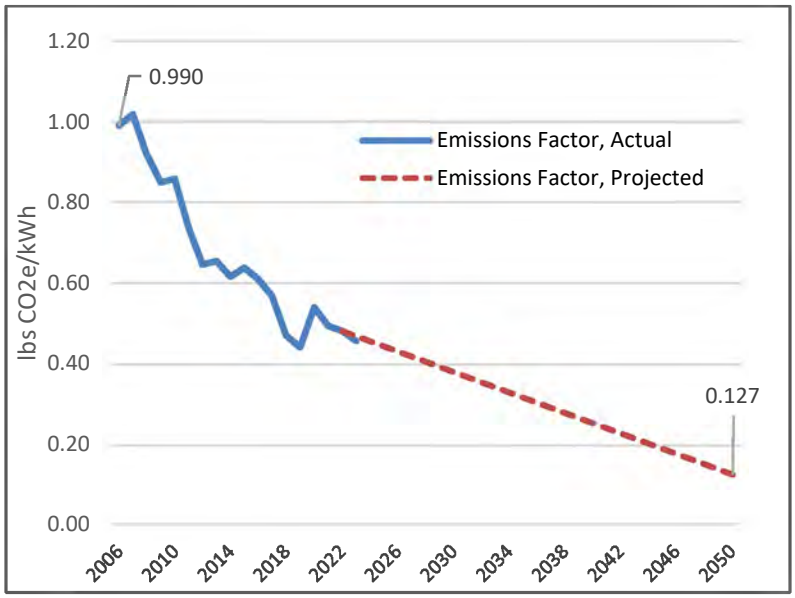
Electricity, which is primarily used for operations at water and wastewater treatment plants, pump stations, headworks, and other facilities, is also MWRA's largest source of emissions, accounting for 42% of the total. Decreases in electricity emissions comprise over 80% of MWRA's total GHG reductions. While MWRA's energy efficiency and renewable energy efforts produced tangible results, leading to a 9% decline in purchased electricity, their impact on emissions is amplified by the steady decrease in the statewide electricity emission factor that reflects a shift away from carbon emitting generation sources toward a greater proportion of renewables[5] – resulting in a 57% reduction in electricity emissions. The continued greening of the regional electric grid is critical to future emissions reductions across the State, with the expectation that emissions from electricity will become minimal over the next few decades, is embedded in all State GHG planning efforts.

[4] MWRA's inventory mainly measures GHGs according to the Local Government Operations Protocol, but also utilizes several other methods as appropriate to MWRA's specific activities. See MWRA's GHG Inventory Update 2006-2022 for more details on accounting methodology.

[5] Electricity emission factors (EF) enable the conversion of megawatt hours of electricity consumed into the equivalent metric tons of CO_2 equivalent ($MTCO_2e$). The smaller the EF, the fewer emissions per MWh of electricity use. MWRA uses EFs updated annually by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, which is calculated based on energy used in Massachusetts. Since 2006, electricity EFs have been reduced by roughly half.

In 2024, MWRA's electricity demand slightly increased, resulting in higher emissions. However, the same electricity emission factor was used for both 2023 and 2024, so emissions for 2024 will most likely be lower when updated. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (see footnote 5 above) publishes emission factors on a two-year delay, so currently only the 2023 number is available. In line with historical annual reductions in the emission factor as the electric grid gets greener, we expect electricity emissions in 2024 to be less than in 2023 when the new factor is applied. Additionally, if targets set by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for renewable energy buildout are met, MWRA estimates that an average grid kilowatt-hour (kWh) will be just over 12.5% as emissions intensive in 2050 as in 2006 (see Figure 2). Since grid electricity accounts for the largest share of MWRA's emissions, the actual rate that this factor decreases could significantly affect reduction efforts.

Figure 1: Grid Emissions Factor, MassDEP & Projected



Natural Gas

Natural gas accounts for over 21% of MWRA's GHG emissions. MWRA uses natural gas to heat facilities throughout the system, but the most significant use is thermal drying at the Quincy pellet plant for processing biosolids, which accounts for nearly 80% of MWRA's emissions from natural gas. The pellet plant utilizes energy intensive drying to convert sludge (the solids that remain after the wastewater treatment process) into fertilizer pellets for land application. Emissions from natural gas increased by 10% due to higher space heating demands at several facilities and for thermal drying at the pellet plant due to the winter of 2024 being much colder than 2023.

Process and Fugitive

Process and fugitive emissions, which comprise 18% of MWRA's emissions, refer to both expected and unexpected releases of GHGs during the wastewater treatment process. Process emissions result from biochemical reactions during wastewater treatment that release methane and nitrous oxide. Fugitive emissions result from uncontrolled or unintentional releases of GHGs from piping, incomplete combustion of digester gas, and decomposition from landfill disposals.

Because both process and fugitive emissions are inherent to the wastewater treatment process and are partially dependent on the size of the service population, they are difficult to reduce. While MWRA continues to explore pathways for reducing these types of emissions, they will continue to prove challenging. This is acknowledged in the Massachusetts 2050 Decarbonization Roadmap, which states that "there are no clear pathways for significant and reliable emissions reductions" and that "no clear policies or technologies exist to achieve deep decarbonization" in the wastewater treatment sector.

Diesel/Fuel Oil and Propane

Diesel, fuel oil, and propane, which comprise 16% of MWRA's GHG emissions, are mainly consumed for building space heating and standby power generators at multiple MWRA facilities. While DITP uses fuel oil in the winter for space heating, the amount used is significantly offset by the combustion of digester gas (methane) in a boiler based combined heat and power system to meet the facility's thermal demand and provide much of its electricity. This system provides the heating equivalent of over five million gallons of fuel oil each year and produces more than 30 million kilowatt-hours of electricity. In 2024, however, DITP had to burn much more fuel than usual to meet heating demand.

Emissions from fuel oil combustion at DITP increased by 150% in 2024 compared to 2023, driving fuel oil emissions up by 51%, and contributing more than 80% of MWRA's overall emission increase in 2024. In addition to the colder winter, initial analysis by MWRA staff suggests that this may be influenced by a recent decrease in the solids and nutrient loading of the influent wastewater. This can reduce the quantity of beneficial digester gas produced per unit of wastewater, thereby impacting the requirement for supplemental boiler fuel oil to meet the full plant heating demand. The quantity of digester gas produced at DITP had decreased substantially beginning in 2020, but has gradually recovered to near long-term average levels. The average thermal content of the digester gas (measured in British Thermal Units (BTUs)/ft^3), however, has continued to fall over this same period. Even though the quantity of gas is similar to historic levels, combusting the gas is producing less heat per unit.

Staff will continue to evaluate whether these changes could be the result of dynamics such as the growth of remote work in the Boston Metro area post pandemic or historically low wastewater flows resulting in longer detention times and solids degradation in the collection system. MWRA will also continue to closely monitor these trends.

Vehicle Fleet

MWRA's operational fleet comprises a small, but important part of GHG emissions at 2%. Vehicle emissions have been reduced by nearly 20% since 2006, in large part due to improvements in vehicle fuel efficiency and the adoption of hybrid and electric vehicles.

Ongoing and Planned Emission Reduction Efforts

MWRA continues to advance projects that reduce GHGs, while providing high quality and reliable water and wastewater services to its communities. MWRA has concrete plans to build on its achievements and reinforce its commitment to mitigating the impacts of climate change.

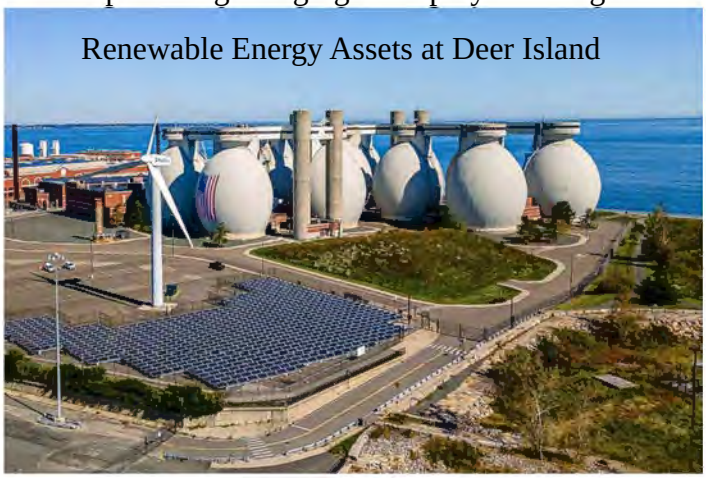
As detailed in another staff summary at today's Board Meeting, in October 2024, MassDEP awarded MWRA a $20 million Climate Protection and Mitigation Trust grant to fund the construction of several decarbonization projects that are anticipated over the next five years, including: (1) canopy and roof mounted solar at DITP; (2) ground mounted solar at the Norumbega covered water storage facility; (3) DITP wind turbine replacement; and (4) electric heat pump installations at several MWRA facilities.

Deer Island Solar Canopy Mock-up



Though they contribute only a small portion of the total MWRA GHG emissions, the vehicle fleet also continues to be electrified. MWRA installed 20 new dual port Level Two chargers, and five Level Three chargers at the Chelsea Administrative Facility in 2025, with plans for additional charging stations at other facilities in 2026. These chargers will support the continued expansion of electric vehicles in the MWRA fleet, while also providing charging to employees and guests.

Renewable Energy Assets at Deer Island



Another project currently underway at MWRA's DITP is a new combined heat and power (CHP) system, which commenced design in October 2024. The current CHP system produces 30.5 gigawatt-hour (GWh)/year from methane derived from the digested wastewater residuals. Once completed, the new system is expected to produce approximately 69.3 GWh/year, more than doubling the renewable electricity produced. This increase in production will mean that roughly 75% of the energy required to run the DITP will be produced on site, significantly lowering the amount of energy purchased from the regional grid. The new CHP system will also optimize thermal production to meet process heating demands while using 75% less fuel oil.

MWRA is also studying the feasibility of installing a large-scale battery at the DITP that could reduce the use of the combustion turbine generators, which operate as standby power sources when the facility is operating close to peak flow during major storms. Besides reducing fossil fuel demand and related GHGs, such a system could also provide significant financial benefit to MWRA through incentive programs and reductions in peak demand for energy bill management.

BUDGET/FISCAL IMPACT:

The FY26 Current Expense Budget (CEB) includes $33.6 million for energy and utilities, driven by $26.1 million for electricity, $3.3 million for diesel fuel, and $992 thousand for natural gas.