

MASSACHUSETTS



June 14, 2021

Representative Aaron Michlewitz, Chairman  
House Committee on Ways and Means  
State House - Room 243  
Boston, MA, 02133

Senator Michael J. Rodrigues, Chairman  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
State House - Room 212  
Boston, MA, 02133

Representative Ann-Margaret Ferrante, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Ways and Means  
Statehouse - Room 42  
Boston, MA, 02133

Senator Cindy F. Friedman, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
State House - Room 208  
Boston, MA, 02133

Representative Todd M. Smola  
State House - Room 124  
Boston, MA, 02133

Senator Patrick M. O'Connor  
State House - Room 419  
Boston, MA, 02133

Dear Conference Committee Members:

I am writing on behalf of the Massachusetts Water Supply Protection Trust (Trust), regarding critical language included in the FY22 Senate Budget that ensures the protection of the Quabbin and Wachusett Reservoirs, which serve as the water supply for three million Massachusetts residents.

The Trust was created through Chapter 149 of the Acts of 2004, s. 27, to guarantee that the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has the necessary resources to fund its Division of Water Supply Protection. The Trust consists of five members tasked with approving the Office of Watershed Management's Annual Work Plan and Budget, which is funded directly by MWRA ratepayers. The creation of the Trust was supposed to help ensure that critical positions within the Office of Watershed Management never remain vacant due to budget constraints. Unfortunately, over the past few years, hiring restrictions enforced across state government have caused delays filling critical positions that protect our watersheds.

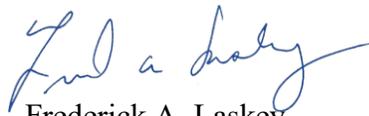
An amendment filed by Senator Anne Gobi created an outside section that we believe will fix this issue. The language states:

*SECTION 4A. Section 75 of chapter 10 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by inserting after the figure "(c)", in line 95, the following words:- "; provided, however, that in accordance with an annual staffing plan the staffing levels, hiring and promotions at the division of water supply protection shall not be subject to any restriction, limitation or cap imposed by any executive office or department."*

Due to the efforts and actions of countless employees and volunteers over the years, the drinking water quality is excellent and the water in the Quabbin and Wachusett Reservoirs meets Federal Drinking Water Standards at the source. MWRA and DCR have worked together to protect the areas surrounding these reservoirs from development and degradation, investing \$135 million in land purchases and conservations restrictions. Because of these efforts, MWRA was not required to include filtration when constructing the Carroll Water Treatment Plant, and it means that the expense of this costly treatment was not passed on to MWRA ratepayers. However, any weakening of these efforts could result in unnecessary and avoidable impacts to the environment, our infrastructure, and the people who benefit from them.

At its June 2, 2021 meeting, the Water Supply Protection Trust voted to endorse this critical language. We respectfully ask that you include it as part of the final FY22 Conference Committee Report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fred a Laskey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Frederick A. Laskey  
Chair