



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
STATE HOUSE • BOSTON, MA 02133
(617) 725-4000

MAURA T. HEALEY
GOVERNOR

KIMBERLEY DRISCOLL
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

August 12, 2026

Stephen Estes-Smargiassi
Interim Executive Director
Massachusetts Water Resources Authority
2 Griffin Way
Chelsea, MA 02150

RE: Support of the Quabbin Watershed Communities

Dear Interim Director Smargiassi,

Thank you for your leadership of the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) during this interim period while a new executive director is being selected. I commend you for your efforts that will help to ensure a smooth transition for the organization and the essential water services it provides to millions of people.

Today I am writing to you about the pressing needs of the communities surrounding the Quabbin Reservoir. As you know, the creation of the Quabbin Reservoir resulted in many sacrifices by this region. Every day, these watershed communities provide an invaluable public service to the communities served by the MWRA system. They continue to help protect the watershed's natural resources while navigating infrastructure constraints, including limitations on their own water supply and economic development. It is time that we more fully recognize the unique contributions of the people and municipalities of the Quabbin watershed.

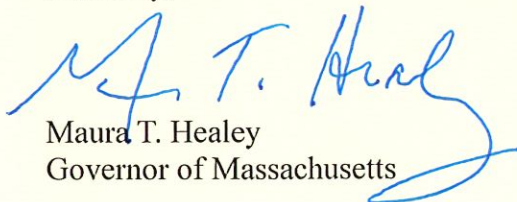
As you are aware, I issued Executive Order 645 establishing a commission to review and recommend changes to the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) program for state-owned land. This Commission is well underway and is currently holding listening sessions across the state, including in the Quabbin region. To demonstrate our commitment to recognize these communities for their unique role as watershed stewards, the Mass Ready Act as filed proposed that the MWRA make two years of annual payments of \$50,000, in addition to existing PILOT, to each of the Quabbin watershed communities. This temporary supplement to the longstanding watershed PILOT payments funded by MWRA is intended as an immediate acknowledgement of these communities' needs, while the PILOT Commission is completing its work to modernize the program for all communities.

The MWRA Board's recent meeting in Belchertown offered an opportunity to hear directly from legislative and local leaders, and I appreciate the Authority's openness to engage on the issues that matter most to the Quabbin communities. I urge you to take the next steps by partnering with these communities to actively explore solutions, including the following:

- **Quabbin Communities' Emergency Response Capabilities:** support local municipal police and fire response efforts in and around the watersheds.
- **MWRA Technical Expertise:** provide technical expertise for water infrastructure planning and design, as well as to support other areas of municipal needs, including assistance with support for state and federal grant and loan applications.
- **Engagement & Access:** establish and convene a new body to serve as a forum for voicing significant concerns and collaborating on productive solutions. This could include members of my administration, MWRA, and advocates from the Quabbin and Wachusett Watersheds.
- **Local Water Supply Issues:** engage with local leaders to evaluate and craft solutions for the specific, near-term water supply issues they are facing, recognizing that each community's challenges are unique.
- **Equity:** ensure that everyone does their part to save water during drought by urging all MWRA member communities to implement state recommended watering restrictions.

I am confident that a dedicated, collaborative effort by MWRA, working hand in hand with the Quabbin communities, will help them thrive while more meaningfully recognizing their essential role in protecting a clean and reliable water supply for millions of people in Massachusetts. My team stands ready to work with you, and I appreciate your partnership.

Sincerely,



Maura T. Healey
Governor of Massachusetts