



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
THE GENERAL COURT
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

21 October 2026

To: Jonathan Gulliver, Incoming Executive Director, Massachusetts Water Resources Authority;
Stephen Estes-Smargiassi, Interim Executive Director, Massachusetts Water Resources Authority
Board of Directors, Massachusetts Water Resources Authority

Dear Mr. Estes-Smargiassi, Mr. Gulliver, and Members of the MWRA Board of Directors:

We respectfully **request that the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) withdraw its Interbasin Transfer Act application to the Water Resources Commission (WRC)** for an additional 20 million gallons of water per day.

We are not convinced that 313 CMR 4.10, which allows donor-basin approval before identifying all potential receiving communities, is consistent in this case with the *Interbasin Transfer Act*. We therefore believe the statutory basis for this application is questionable.

That concern is compounded by MWRA's failure to substantiate the need for this specific additional volume. Your analysis addresses whether the system can accommodate the proposed increase. It does not establish why an additional 20 million gallons per day is necessary or why that amount should be authorized before receiving communities and their actual water needs have been identified. Given that no receiving communities have been identified, the public cannot discern what, if any, harm would result from the withdrawal of your application.

MWRA should simply withdraw this application now, and finally grapple honestly with its obligation to the communities that steward the water on which so many depend.

As you know well, nearly 90 years ago, the Commonwealth disincorporated and flooded four Swift River Valley towns to create the Quabbin Reservoir. The communities surrounding the reservoir have lived with the consequences of that decision ever since. Quabbin communities have protected this extraordinary resource, accepted substantial restrictions on their own economic development, and borne lasting economic consequences — while not receiving a commensurate share of the benefits generated by this resource.

These are longstanding concerns of equity, representation, and shared responsibility that the Commonwealth has yet to resolve. Before pursuing an inadequately substantiated increase in withdrawals from the Quabbin, the Commonwealth and MWRA must address the inequities embedded in the current arrangement.

In summary, we ask MWRA to:

1. **Withdraw its application for an additional 20 million gallons per day** from the Quabbin Reservoir and commit to utilizing the traditional process under the *Interbasin Transfer Act* of considering the donor basin and receiving communities contemporaneously for future proposals.

2. **Commit to a meaningful process with Quabbin communities and their representatives** to address longstanding concerns about regional representation, stewardship costs, economic restrictions, and appropriate financial benefits for the communities that protect this resource. Note that this is not the first time this request has been made. In 2024, MWRA undertook a system expansion feasibility study of the Quabbin region, but did not meaningfully engage with communities despite repeated requests to do so. The resulting MWRA study of Quabbin communities did not identify actionable solutions or propose MWRA support, further straining relations between MWRA and Quabbin communities. In August 2026, Governor Maura Healey wrote to MWRA urging it to support the pressing needs of watershed communities, yet MWRA has taken no meaningful action.
3. **Work with the Commonwealth and regional stakeholders on a durable, equitable water policy** that includes meaningful donor-community participation and ensures that future water-supply decisions account for pressing climate realities and the needs and obligations of both sending and receiving communities.

Withdrawing this application would not end the conversation about water needs in eastern Massachusetts. It would simply create the conditions for a more responsible and productive one — one grounded in demonstrated need, a sound legal basis, transparent decision-making, and a fair accounting of regional obligations. **It would also give MWRA an opportunity to undertake the necessary climate-related, hydrological analysis and potable-water study to help it understand and secure a sustainable water future for the entire Commonwealth for generations to come.**

We look forward to your response and to a meaningful path forward.

Yours in service,

Jo Comerford
STATE SENATOR
Hampshire, Franklin, Worcester district

Jacob R. Oliveira
STATE SENATOR
Hampden, Hampshire, Worcester district

Aaron Saunders
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
7th Hampden district

Susannah Whipps
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
2nd Franklin district

cc:

Governor Maura Healey
Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll
Secretary Rebecca Tepper
Climate Chief Melissa Hoffer
MWRA Advisory Board
Water Resources Commissioners
Western Massachusetts Director Kristen Elechko
Rural Affairs Director Anne Gobi
Quabbin Watershed Municipal Officials