

May 22, 2017

RE: Please Support Budget Amendment #876

Dear Senator:

Our organizations are writing to ask your support in voting **in favor of** Senators Rodrigues and Ross's budget amendment **#876** which would provide \$1.4 million in funding to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) for Massachusetts to enhance its water quality programs so they are better able to support regulatory initiatives including the delegation of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Program (NPDES) from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The NPDES is an important water quality program established by the federal Clean Water Act. It is important to fund the underlying science for this program for the following reasons:

- A robust water quality program built on ample data and analysis supports sound decision making and innovative and integrated watershed planning.
- Massachusetts is one of only four states in the nation that do not currently have delegation. It is anticipated that the EPA will be facing significant budgetary cuts in the near future. It makes sense for Massachusetts to join the other 46 states to implement this program in order to provide continued protection of our water resources.
- Currently Massachusetts communities and businesses that have NPDES permits must deal with two separate agencies when filing their permits. If Massachusetts receives delegation it will streamline permitting and allow greater opportunities to promote integrated water management planning. Integrated water management will allow MassDEP greater opportunities to work with communities that are facing drinking water, wastewater and stormwater permitting requirements and to direct measures that will have the greatest environmental benefit for each ratepayer dollar spent.
- MassDEP did an analysis that showed that the state is actually proposing to have more staff working on the NPDES program than what EPA currently has dedicated to the Massachusetts permitting program.
- MassDEP has had primacy for the federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) program for many years and we can unequivocally state that MassDEP has never attempted to administer the SDWA program in a manner that could be construed as less stringent than the federal program. In fact, the record will show that MassDEP usually errs on the side of being more protective than required.

The undersigned organizations support Governor Baker's legislation "An Act to enable the Commonwealth's Administration of the Massachusetts Pollutant Discharge Elimination System." Our organizations support funding a Massachusetts NPDES program through a separate line-item in the budget as one way to ensure a reliable revenue stream for the program. We would appreciate your support of Amendment #876 to include this important funding in the Senate Budget.

Sincerely,

Philip D. Guerin, President
MA Coalition for Water Resources Stewardship

Geoffrey Beckwith, Executive Director
Massachusetts Municipal Association

Bob Greene, President
Massachusetts Water Pollution Control Association

Jennifer A. Pederson, Executive Director
Massachusetts Water Works Association