Senator Eldridge- Water Innovation Legislation, 2013-2014 Session


This bill would authorize the creation of a 10-year Water Infrastructure Bond to fund local drinking water, wastewater and storm water improvements. The bond would provide $200m in annual funding that would be directed as follows:

- 20% of the funds would be sent annually to every municipality, similar to Ch. 90 transportation funding. New funding would be restricted to water infrastructure.
- 40% to supplement the existing State Revolving Fund low-interest loan program administered by the Water Pollution Abatement Trust.
- 40% for grants to fund municipal water projects. This new grant program would be administered by the Water Pollution Abatement Trust. Grants would be allocated subject to the following:
  - Qualifying municipalities must institute best management practices including adoption of a long-term asset management plan and full-cost pricing.
  - Affordability factors, including existing local water rates, are considered when allocating funding.
  - Up to 10% of the funds are set aside for projects using innovative or green technology.

S.945: An Act to mitigate water resource impacts (“Water Banking”) (Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture)

The bill authorizes adoption of an opt-in "water-banking" fund by communities, public water suppliers and DPWs allowing them to charge a reasonable fee for new or increased water withdrawals and sewer use, or when new or redevelopment projects are unable to comply with federal, state or local storm water rules. Funds would be used by communities to invest in greener water infrastructure, increase the capacity of wastewater systems and protect drinking water supplies. Measures could include local recharge of storm/wastewater, water reuse, retrofitting properties with water-saving devices, fixing leaky pipes and land acquisition for wellhead protection.
S.358: An Act relative to best management practices in water *(Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture)*

This bill would incentivize the adoption of best management practices for both the clean water SRF and the drinking water SRF. It would direct DEP, with input from DLS, to establish guidelines for best management practices in water management, including full cost pricing, financial management, and use of a storm water enterprise fund.

S.350: An Act relative to interest rates for the state revolving loan fund for water and sewer projects *(Refiled by Sen. Creem, Co-sponsored by Sen. Eldridge) (Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture)*

The bill would replace the language in the General Laws setting the interest rate at 2% with language that would allow the rate to be set at 0% for the state revolving fund for water and sewer projects, allowing cities and towns to continue borrowing affordable funds to make needed repairs to our water supply systems.


This bill would require the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center to develop a program for pilot testing innovative water technologies. There is a growing cluster of water innovation companies in Massachusetts developing new water technologies that can be marketed globally. This economic opportunity was highlighted during the recent state Water Innovation Mission to Israel. The proposed pilot initiative would support help bring new technologies to market and expand economic growth potential in this promising sector. The bill also requires DEP to create incentives through the Administrative Consent Order process for the use of innovative technologies.

S.1479: An Act promoting the use of total energy impact analysis *(Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight)*

This bill would require that new construction or major renovation projects in state buildings measure the energy implications of all resources used. Resources such as electricity, water, transportation, materials, heating, and waste have financial and societal energy impacts. The bill would, therefore, require a total life cycle energy analysis of such buildings, separate from the life cycle cost analysis. The purpose of the legislation is to encourage the state’s awareness of the total energy impact of such projects to help establish benchmarks to improve sustainability.
FOR BUDGET OR ENVIRONMENTAL BOND BILL:

Drinking Water Supply Protection Program

The Department of Environmental Protection’s Aquifer Land Acquisition Program (ALA), was established pursuant to M.G.L. c. 111, section 160 in 1982 and was initially funded at $10 million. Funding for this program ceased until FY02. In FY02, the program was funded once again with $9 million from an expiring DEP bond authorization. It then received another $14.5 million from the Environmental Bond Bill that was approved in 2002. Created as a new initiative under former EOEAA Secretary Ellen Roy Herzfelder in 2004, the Drinking Water Supply Protection Program has since provided funding for the acquisition of land or interests in land for the purposes of protecting a current or future drinking water supply source.

The Drinking Water Supply Protection grant program is a competitive grant program administered by EOEAA in cooperation with DEP, which provides recipients up to 50% of the funds needed for the purchase of land or interested in land for the following purposes: (1) protection of existing DEP-approved public drinking water supplies; (2) protection of planned future public drinking water supply wells or intakes; or (3) groundwater recharge. In FY05, the program received $3.1 million in funding from the 2002 Environmental Bond Bill. Funding for Drinking Water Supply Protection grants now comes from the 2008 Energy and Environmental Bond Bill; however, EOEAA stopped soliciting new applications for grants in FY13 due to a bond cap established in 2011 pursuant to the Governor’s five-year capital investment plan. I will advocate for the maintenance of this program and its goals, perhaps through the state’s operating budget.

For questions or more information, please contact my office at (617) 722-1120 or James.Eldridge@masenate.gov.