

Water Supply District of Acton

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Joint Board of Water Commissioners and Finance Committee Meeting Agenda

Monday, October 19, 2026 @ 7:00 PM

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, meetings are being held virtually via Zoom

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

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Webinar ID: 858 2704 1409

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- Call to order
- Comments from the public
- Appoint one Commissioner to sign warrants while conducting meetings virtually
- Approve Minutes from 9/23 meeting

OLD BUSINESS:

- Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)
 - Current sample data, if available
 - Discussion of Additional PFAS Upgrades
- Aeration Treatment at South Acton Water Treatment Plant
- Drought Status and Water Use Restrictions
- Free Cash Certification
- MWRA MetroWest Expansion

NEW BUSINESS:

- Personnel Update
- Annual Meeting Location
- Adjourn Open Meeting

Any agenda item(s) which did not come to the attention of the Board of Water Commissioners 48 hours prior to this meeting and were not reasonably anticipated.

Board of Water Commissioners

Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, September 23, 2026 @ 7:00 PM

- Call to order
- Comments from the public
- Appoint one Commissioner to sign warrants while conducting meetings virtually
- Approve Minutes from 9/8/26 meeting

OLD BUSINESS:

- Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)
 - Current sample data, if available
 - Discussion of Additional PFAS Upgrades
- Drought Status and Water Use Restrictions
- MWRA MetroWest Expansion

NEW BUSINESS:

- FY26 Financial Update
- Fall Flushing Program
- Aeration Treatment at South Acton Water Treatment Plant
- Adjourn Open Meeting

EXECUTIVE SESSION: *In accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A, Section 21(a), Purpose 3, to discuss strategy with respect to potential litigation, as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the District.*

Present at Tonight's Meeting:

Commissioners: Erika Lin (Chair), Barry Rosen, John Petersen

District Manager: Matthew Mostoller

Treasurer/Collector: Ashley Pinard

Environmental Analyst: Shawn Case

Members of the Public: Bill Guthlein, Alissa Nicol, Ron Parenti

START OF MINUTES

Ms. Lin opened the meeting at 7:01 p.m. and ensured that everyone could hear and be heard.

Comments from the public

No public comments were made at the start of the meeting.

Appoint one Commissioner to sign warrants while conducting meetings virtually

Ms. Lin motioned to authorize Mr. Rosen to sign warrants while meetings are conducted virtually, through the next regularly scheduled meeting. Mr. Petersen seconded, and it was unanimously approved via roll call vote: Mr. Rosen, Ms. Lin, and Mr. Petersen.

Approve Minutes from the meeting of 9/8/2026

Mr. Petersen moved to approve the minutes from the meeting of September 8, 2026, as presented in the packet. Mr. Rosen seconded, and it was unanimously approved via roll call vote: Mr. Rosen, Ms. Lin, and Mr. Petersen.

OLD BUSINESS:

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

Current sample data, if available

Mr. Mostoller reported that no new PFAS sampling results were available, and that September sampling was scheduled for that week and the following week.

Discussion of Additional PFAS Upgrades

Mr. Mostoller reported that the failed South Acton PFAS equalization basin transfer pump had been removed and returned to the manufacturer for evaluation. The manufacturer was investigating the cause of the premature failure and whether the pump could be repaired or required replacement.

The District's engineer had proposed purchasing an additional pump, bringing the total to three. Following discussions with Mr. Godfrey, Mr. Mostoller recommended delaying that purchase. The estimated lead time of 14 to 16 weeks would provide little immediate redundancy, and staff wanted to assess the remaining operating pump before purchasing another of the same model. If similar problems were found, staff might consider a different pump model.

Mr. Mostoller acknowledged that a later spare-pump purchase might not be eligible for previously approved State Revolving Fund funding. Staff nevertheless did not consider that sufficient reason to purchase another pump before understanding the failures. Commissioners expressed agreement with waiting for additional information.

Drought Status and Water Use Restrictions

Mr. Mostoller reported that the District had issued a notice continuing Level IV restrictions after the previous meeting. Subsequent rainfall had raised Nashoba Brook above the District's low-flow trigger, and the operational flow restriction at South Acton had been alleviated. Groundwater levels, however, remained well below normal and continued to decline.

Staff recommended moving to Level III restrictions, allowing nonessential water use one day per week. This would provide an opportunity for seasonal cleaning and lawn restoration before winter. Mr. Mostoller said staff believed the District could meet that limited additional demand.

Commissioners supported the recommendation while emphasizing that public notices should clearly explain the continued groundwater deficit. The Board discussed how rainfall, visible surface water, and greener lawns could create an impression that water supplies had recovered. Mr. Mostoller also explained that substantial snow depth did not necessarily indicate high moisture content. Recent rainfall and cooler evenings had generally benefited established lawns and landscaping.

A commissioner reported observing several instances of watering under the existing restrictions. Mr. Mostoller requested times and addresses for follow-up. The previously ordered sandwich-board signs had not yet arrived.

A motion was made and seconded to move the District to Level III restrictions and notify residents. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote: Mr. Petersen, Mr. Rosen, and Ms. Lin voted aye. Mr. Mostoller stated that more stringent restrictions would be reinstated if the change proved unsustainable.

NEW BUSINESS:

FY26 Financial Update

Ms. Pinard presented the FY2026 fourth-quarter financial update through June 30. Expenses totaled approximately \$7.7 million, with approximately \$389,000 unspent across expense accounts. Revenue totaled approximately \$8.4 million, about \$174,000 above projection.

Ms. Pinard confirmed that the previously approved \$100,000 reserve fund transfer for lights, power, and fuel had been completed, and the associated bills paid. She did not anticipate another transfer during the first quarter of FY2027. If costs continued at current

levels, the issue might return during the third quarter, although it was too early to determine whether another transfer would be necessary.

Mr. Petersen questioned a \$2.3 million expense variance displayed on one spreadsheet. Ms. Pinard directed the Board to the monthly budget-to-actual spreadsheet, which showed the correct unspent balance of approximately \$389,000. Approximately 96 percent of the expense budget had been used, and revenue was approximately 102 percent of projection. Mr. Petersen welcomed closer alignment between budgeted and actual figures compared with previous years.

Ms. Pinard explained that the reported paid-expense figures were not expected to change materially. The final trial balance remained subject to adjusting journal entries from the auditor.

In response to questions posed by the Board, staff explained that the approximately \$40,000 favorable engineering variance reflected engineering costs charged to specific projects rather than the general engineering account. The approximately \$27,000 favorable information reports variance reflected additional PFAS and lead and copper public notifications that had been budgeted but were not required. Much of the approximately \$33,000 favorable IT variance resulted from accounting software costs that were only partially paid before the fiscal year ended.

Mr. Petersen asked why rent and lease revenue was approximately \$149,000 against a projection of approximately \$115,000 and whether the higher amount should inform the next budget. The discussion clarified that this question concerned rent and lease revenue, rather than solar field revenue, which had been below projection. Ms. Pinard agreed to investigate and report back. Ms. Lin thanked her for the update.

Fall Flushing Program

Mr. Mostoller reported that fall flushing was expected to begin October 5 and continue through October, with work paused on October 12 for Indigenous Peoples' Day. Work would primarily cover West Acton, generally south of Route 2 and west of Main Street. The District would publish the schedule online and communicate progress through social media.

Additional flushing along Breezy Point and a fire flow test on Powder Mill Road were planned, with dates still to be determined. Flushing was expected to occur Monday through Thursday, beginning around 8:00 a.m. and potentially continuing until 8:00 p.m., depending on tank recovery. Staff would shorten workdays if necessary.

The goal was to complete a full West Acton flushing cycle. Mr. Mostoller explained that the District had not completed a full scheduled cycle during its spring or fall programs since PFAS was discovered in 2020.

In response to Mr. Petersen, Mr. Mostoller explained that West Acton represents roughly 25 percent of the system, although it may contain somewhat more piping than other quadrants. Depending on location, flushing water enters storm drainage or infiltrates directly into the ground. Total water use would be available after flushing was completed.

Aeration Treatment at South Acton Water Treatment Plant

Mr. Mostoller reported that both South Acton aeration towers had been removed from service following structural failures. The first tower had developed a problem around June and was subsequently taken offline for investigation. The redundant tower experienced a similar failure on its second day of use treating the full flow of the Assabet and School Street wells.

MassDEP had approved temporarily bypassing aeration. Staff were maintaining appropriate water pH and relying on the granular activated carbon, or GAC, for volatile organic compound removal. Mr. Mostoller explained that GAC had been the District's original treatment method for those contaminants. Sampling conducted to date produced favorable non-detect results.

August raw-water sampling showed the highest vinylidene chloride (VDC) concentration of 5.37 parts per billion at the Assabet 3 well. Mr. Mostoller reported that the state maximum contaminant level was seven parts per billion, and the District's own treatment goal was one part per billion. Blending reduced the incoming concentration to approximately 1.2 parts per billion, while the non-detect treated-water results met the District's treatment goal.

Mr. Mostoller had met with EPA that morning. EPA would encourage W. R. Grace to conduct additional sampling to help monitor potential changes in incoming contamination. An interim plan developed with MassDEP called for quarterly sampling of South Acton raw-water sources and monthly sampling at multiple points through the treatment process, including before and after GAC and as finished water entered distribution.

Staff were working with Calgon Carbon to evaluate the useful life of the existing GAC when used for both PFAS and volatile organic compound removal. The tower manufacturer was scheduled to inspect the equipment the following day. The District might retain its own engineers to review repair or replacement recommendations.

If replacement were necessary, the Board may need to consider whether to retain aeration or rely on GAC alone. Permanently removing aeration would require engineering, MassDEP review and permitting, and further evaluation comparable to a pilot study. It would also eliminate one of the District's two methods for removing volatile organic compounds. Mr. Mostoller noted that bypassing GAC under the conditions discussed would leave VDC below the state limit but above the District's own action level.

In response to the Board's questions, Mr. Mostoller explained that aeration normally provides mineral oxidation, volatile organic compound removal, and pH adjustment. Operating without it had increased potassium hydroxide and potassium permanganate use. Staff planned modifications to the potassium hydroxide feed system to provide additional reserve capacity. They were also monitoring possible membrane fouling and solids accumulation in the GAC and the recycle system.

Mr. Parenti asked about the nature and age of the failures. Mr. Mostoller explained that internal support brackets appeared to have failed, allowing supported media to fall. The first failure had been relatively subtle; the second was catastrophic, with material exiting through the air inlet. The underlying cause remained uncertain. The South Acton towers entered service in 2015, while a similar tower installed in North Acton in 2009 had not shown comparable problems.

Current costs were being managed through the W. R. Grace maintenance and operations appropriation and the regular maintenance and operations budget. Mr. Mostoller hoped repairs could be covered with existing funds. Replacement would require additional financial discussion. Further updates would follow the manufacturer's assessment.

Additional New Business and Commissioner Recognition

Mr. Mostoller and Ms. Pinard identified no additional new business.

Mr. Petersen thanked Mr. Mostoller for arranging his registration for the NEWWA fall meeting, which he attended for a day and a half. He said the meeting helped deepen his understanding of water issues, provided useful introductions, and demonstrated the respect held for the District within the broader water community.

Mr. Petersen also recognized the District's support of a residential water-use study and its contributions to regional MWRA work. He noted that Maynard's DPW manager had acknowledged substantial contributions from Acton and Concord. Mr. Mostoller thanked him and clarified that the water-use study had previously been discussed publicly and circulated to the Board in the spring or early summer.

With no other business, a motion was made and seconded to close the open session. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote: Mr. Rosen, Mr. Petersen, and Ms. Lin voted aye.

The open meeting closed at 7:50 p.m.

Executive Session

Ms. Lin moved to enter executive session pursuant to *M.G.L. c. 30A, Section 21(a), Purpose 3*, to discuss strategy with respect to potential litigation because an open meeting could have a detrimental effect on the District's litigating position, and not to reconvene in open session.

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by roll call vote: Mr. Rosen, Mr. Petersen, and Ms. Lin voted aye.

The next Board of Water Commissioners meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 5, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

Acton Water District - PWS 2002000

Summary of Treated Water Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) 2026

Sample Date	Sample Location			
	Clapp/Whitcomb WTP	Central Acton WTP	North Acton WTP	South Acton WTP
January 7, 2026	Not Sampled	Not Sampled	Not Sampled	15.2
January 13, 2026	Not Sampled	Not Sampled	3	Not Sampled
January 28, 2026	Not Sampled	11.6	Not Sampled	Not Sampled
February 4, 2026	Not Sampled	12.5	2.9	Not Sampled
February 18, 2026	Not Sampled	Not Sampled	Not Sampled	14
February 26, 2026	Not Sampled	Not Sampled	Not Sampled	ND
March 18, 2026	Not Sampled	13.8	Not Sampled	ND
April 23, 2026	Not Sampled	Not Sampled	Not Sampled	ND
April 29, 2026	Not Sampled	ND	ND	Not Sampled
May 19, 2026	Not Sampled	ND	ND	Not Sampled
May 20, 2026	Not Sampled	Not Sampled	Not Sampled	ND
June 16, 2026	Not Sampled	ND	ND	ND
July 7, 2026	Not Sampled	ND	ND	Not Sampled
July 14, 2026	Not Sampled	Not Sampled	Not Sampled	ND
August 12, 2026	Not Sampled	ND	ND	ND
September 21, 2026	Not Sampled	ND	Not Sampled	Not Sampled
September 22, 2026	Not Sampled	Not Sampled	ND	ND

Notes:

WTP = Water Treatment Plant

Units are in parts per trillion (ppt) or ng/L

ND = below method detection limit

Not Sampled = PFAS samples are not collected at each WTP on the same date or when a WTP is not producing water for consumption

Results provided are the sum of 6 PFAS Compounds - PFOA, PFOS, PFNA, PFHxS, PFHpA, and PFDA

Exceeds Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) of 20 ppt or ng/L

All treated water data is shared with consumers to be transparent. Not all of the data presented here will meet MassDEP data acceptance standards.



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Department of Environmental Protection

Address: 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900, Boston MA 02114 | Phone: 617-292-5500

Maura T. Healey

Governor

Kim Driscoll

Lieutenant Governor

Rebecca Tepper

Secretary

Bonnie Heiple

Commissioner

October 15, 2026

RE: Drought Conditions Improve

Dear Water Management Act (WMA) Registrants and Permittees:

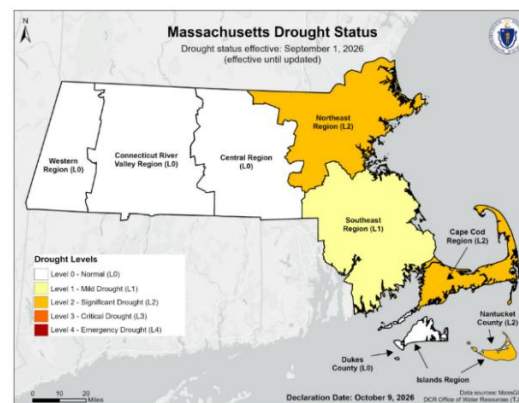
On October 9, 2026, Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Rebecca Tepper updated drought conditions across Massachusetts. The Connecticut River Valley Region has improved from a Level 1 – Mild Drought to Normal Conditions, while the Northeast Region has moved from a Level 1 – Mild Drought to a Level 2 – Significant Drought.

Drought levels are as follows:

Level 0 – Normal conditions in the Western, Connecticut River Valley, and Central Drought Regions, and in Dukes County.

Level 1 – Mild Drought conditions in the Drought Southeast Region.

Level 2 – Significant Drought conditions in the Northeast and Cape Cod Drought Regions, as well as Nantucket County.



“The Nor’easter brought much-needed rainfall to Massachusetts, but drought conditions continue in several parts of the state,” said Secretary Tepper. Rainfall totals in September ranged between 5 to 12 inches across Massachusetts. The highest totals were recorded in southern portions of Bristol, Plymouth and western Barnstable Counties, while the lowest totals were observed in northeastern and western Massachusetts. Overall groundwater deficits in the eastern part of the state kept those regions in drought. The rain helped keep fire danger levels down.

All WMA Registrants and Permittees should review the requirements of their WMA Registration(s) and/or Permit(s) and implement the required restrictions. If you hold both a registration and a permit that includes seasonal restrictions on nonessential outdoor water use, then the restrictions required in your permit are controlling.

Public Water Suppliers (PWS) with a WMA Permit requiring outdoor water use restrictions may lift the restrictions after September 30, while those implementing restrictions based on their WMA Registration shall keep the requirements in place throughout the year. Suppliers may require more stringent restrictions than those outlined in their Permit or Registration. Restrictions for Drought Levels 1-2 are attached to this correspondence.

While drought conditions persist, MassDEP encourages all suppliers to continue efforts to conserve water.

- Any time **PWSs impose mandatory outdoor water use restrictions, they are required to notify MassDEP, per 310 CMR 22.15(8)**. If you have ended seasonal restrictions, please inform MassDEP by submitting a MassDEP Notification of Water Use Restriction form which can be found under Additional Resources on our [Outdoor Water Use Restrictions Webpage](#).

Please send completed forms for PWSs to DEP.WMA@mass.gov (preferred) or by US Mail to MassDEP Water Management Program, 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900, Boston, MA 02114. Contact Brittany Segill at brittany.segill@mass.gov with any questions or concerns.

- **Golf Course Registrants are required to notify MassDEP when the Seasonal Demand Management Plan (SDMP) or other required restrictions are put in place.** The Notification of Water Use Restriction form for golf courses can be found under Additional Resources on our [Outdoor Water Use Restrictions Webpage](#).

Please send completed forms for Golf Courses to DEP.WMA@mass.gov (preferred) or by US Mail to MassDEP Water Management Program, 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900, Boston, MA 02114. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Linjun Yao at linjun.yao@mass.gov.

Notifying MassDEP When Water Use Restrictions Are Implemented

MassDEP recognizes that some PWSs are required to restrict nonessential outdoor water use year-round according to their Registration Statement, while others implement seasonal or streamflow triggered restrictions based on permit requirements. With these differing approaches it has proven difficult for MassDEP to keep accurate records of restrictions in place throughout the state. To better reflect each PWS's status and keep our website up to date, MassDEP requests that PWSs resend us a form each April, even if your community's restriction is ongoing from the prior calendar year. In addition, a new form should be completed and sent to MassDEP whenever your PWS implements a new restriction, raises/lowers the level, or ends a restriction.

Flushing Programs

Suppliers may consider delaying routine pipe flushing if such a delay will not adversely affect water quality. Suppliers with mandatory flushing schedules should contact your DEP Regional Drinking Water Program Chief (listed below) to discuss concerns or to delay routinely scheduled pipe flushing.

If a PWS will be flushing water mains while there is a drought in their Region, MassDEP has developed this infographic that suppliers can post on their websites explaining the reasons for flushing water mains to the public.

- [MassDEP DWP - Water Distribution System Flushing During Droughts Infographic](#)

Additional Outreach Materials for Public Water Suppliers

For PWSs, outreach to your community alerting them of drought conditions in your region and providing information on water conservation is an important way to promote conservation. **This letter includes a drought map and conservation guidance for PWS customers that suppliers can post to their website** ("Water Conservation Guidance for Public Water Suppliers and Municipal Water Users" below).

In addition, the following video series can be posted to your website. It helps to explain the drought declaration process and how outdoor watering restrictions relate to state drought declarations:

Video 1: [What does drought mean in MA?](#)

Video 2: [Why Does Drought Sometimes Get Declared Even When We Get A lot of Rain?](#)

Video 3: [Public Water Suppliers and Outdoor Watering Restrictions](#)

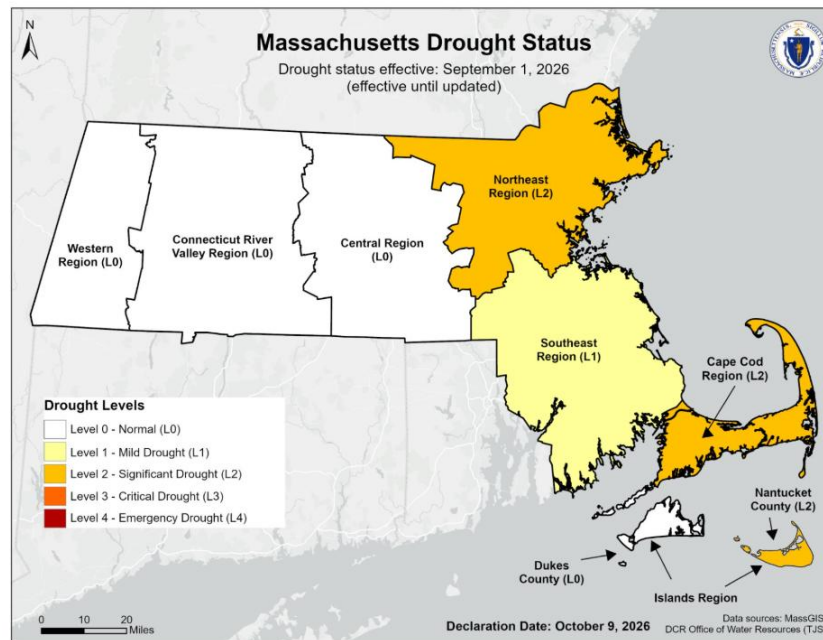
Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kate England', with a stylized, cursive script.

Kate England, Acting Assistant Commissioner,
Bureau of Water Resources

Cc: Duane LeVangie, WMA Program Chief, DEP Boston (617-780-1962)
Sean Griffin, Acting Drinking Water Chief, DEP NERO (857-354-0153)
Lauren Thistle, Drinking Water Chief, DEP CERO (413-361-8794)
Jim McLaughlin, Drinking Water Chief, DEP SERO (857-260-1002)
Andrew Kelly, Drinking Water Chief, DEP WERO (617-875-2710)
Vandana Rao, EOEEA
Anne Carroll, DCR OWR
Jennifer Pederson, MWWA
Lydia Olson, Mass Rivers Alliance
Melissa Shapiro, Mass Rivers Alliance
Steve Estes-Smargiassi, MWRA
Andrew Gottlieb, APCC
Andrew Ingham, GCSANE

Water Conservation Guidance for Public Water Suppliers and Municipal Water Users



The Drought Declaration Process: Drought Levels and associated water use restrictions are determined through monitoring and evaluation of six indices (precipitation, groundwater, fire danger, streamflow, lakes and impoundments, and evapotranspiration). Water supply reservoirs and other visible surface water are just one factor in the hydrologic conditions that are assessed when droughts are declared. Therefore, when water use restrictions are imposed at the local level despite reservoirs being nearly full, it is evidence that Public Water Suppliers are working hard to maintain reliable drinking water supplies despite difficult environmental conditions. Outdoor watering restrictions in these situations help to ensure that adequate water supplies will continue to be available for essential uses such as drinking, washing, fire protection, and businesses, even if drought conditions persist.

For Public Water Supplies:

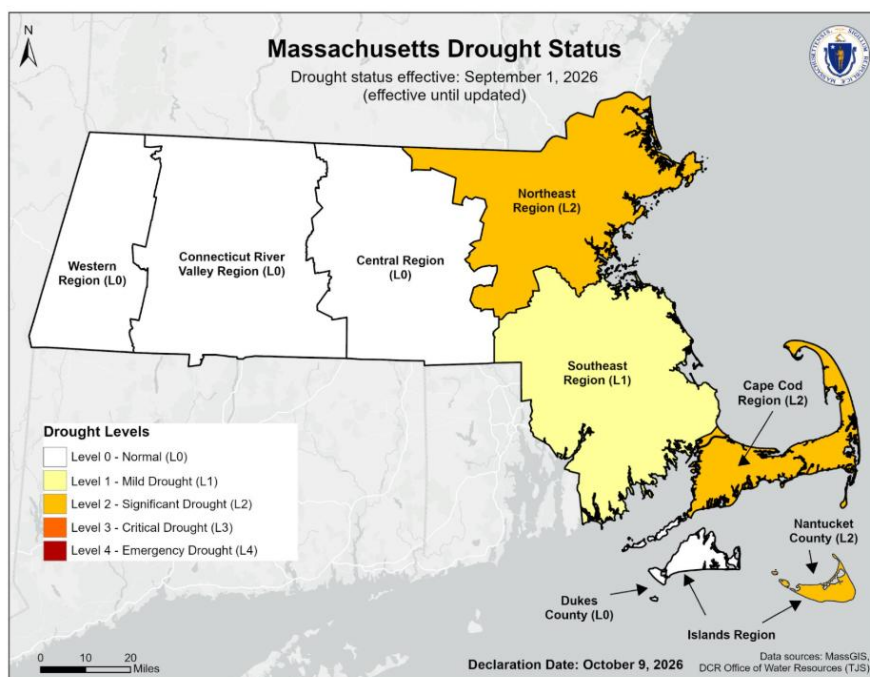
- **Level 1 (Mild Drought):** All nonessential outdoor water use restricted to **one day per week, before 9 a.m. and after 5 p.m.**, except that watering ornamentals and flower gardens with hand-held hose, drip irrigation, or watering cans may be permitted.
- **Level 2 (Significant Drought):** **All nonessential outdoor water uses banned**, except that watering ornamentals and flower gardens with drip irrigation, hand-held hose or watering cans may be permitted.

Private Wells:

- Households and businesses that draw water from private wells should conserve water by reducing indoor and outdoor water usage, and by abiding by the water use restrictions in place in their community.

Water Conservation Guidance for Golf Courses

Drought Conditions Worsen in Several Regions Across Massachusetts



Depending on their local supply and environmental conditions, golf course operators may consider implement restrictions more stringent than those outlined in the MA Drought Management Plan for the Drought Level in their Region or County. Guidance for Levels 1-2 is provided below for your consideration.

For Golf Courses:

- **Level 1 (Mild Drought):** Irrigation of fairways is reduced to 80% of normal, roughs should be limited to 50% of normal, and no irrigation of landscaping and ornamentals*
- **Level 2 (Significant Drought):** Irrigation of fairways is reduced to 60% of normal, and there shall be no watering of roughs, landscaping, and ornamentals*

*** At all Drought Levels:** for courses whose core business includes a venue for special events, watering venue ornamentals, gardens, and flowers with a hand-held hose or drip irrigation is permitted.

Region Determination:

For assistance in determining which region your Golf Course falls under, please refer to the State's [Drought Regions Webpage](#). Under additional resources, near the bottom of the Drought Regions webpage, is a PDF link for "[Maps of MA Drought Regions with Lists of Cities and Towns](#)" which lists every town/city located in each Drought Region. You may also contact Linjun Yao at linjun.yao@mass.gov.

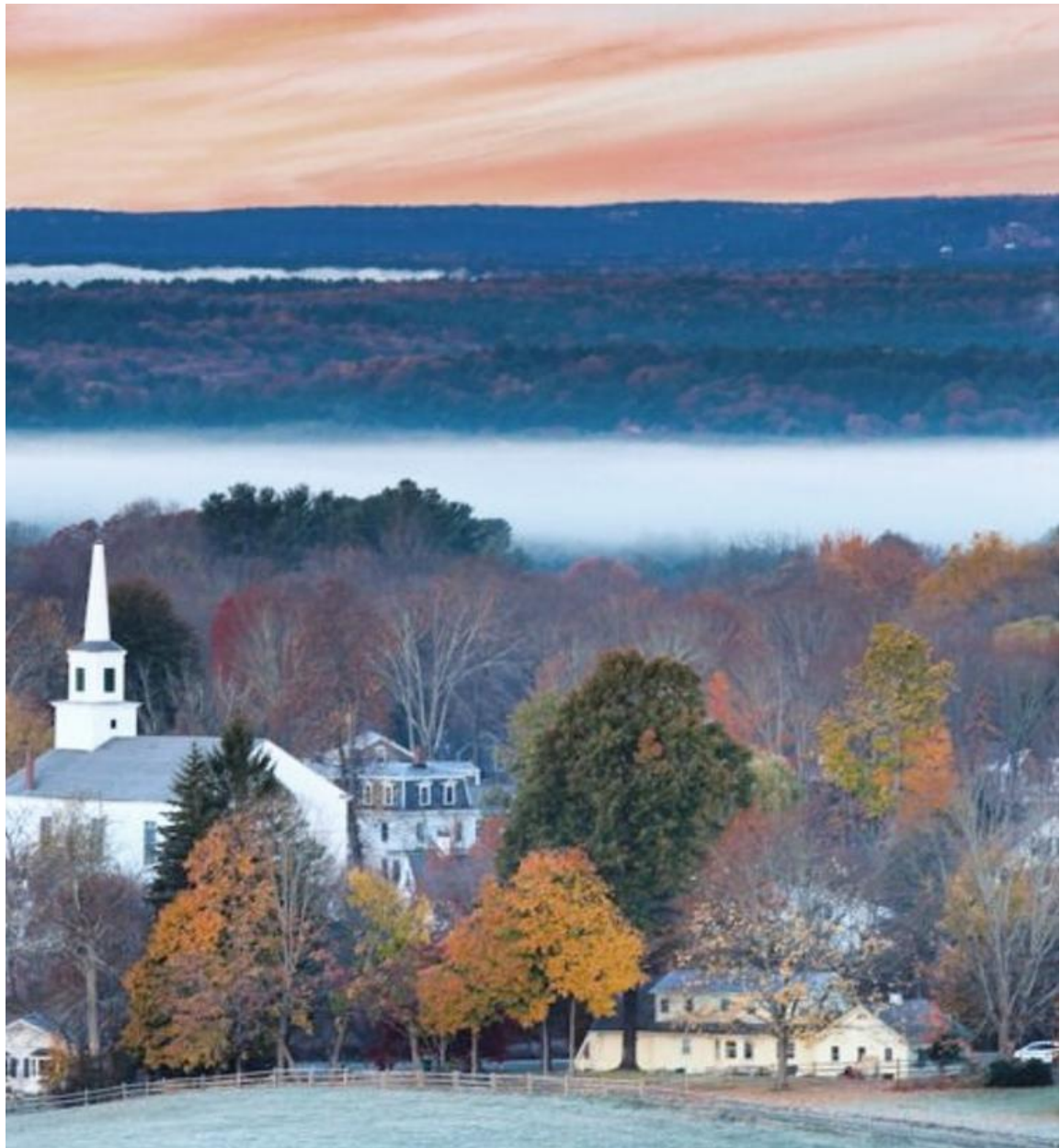
693 MASS AVENUE



Acton Water District
WATER USE RESTRICTIONS
LEVEL 3
Outdoor Water Use
Limited To
1 Day/Week
www.actonwater.com

MetroWest-MWRA Connect: Cost Allocation Study

Executive Summary

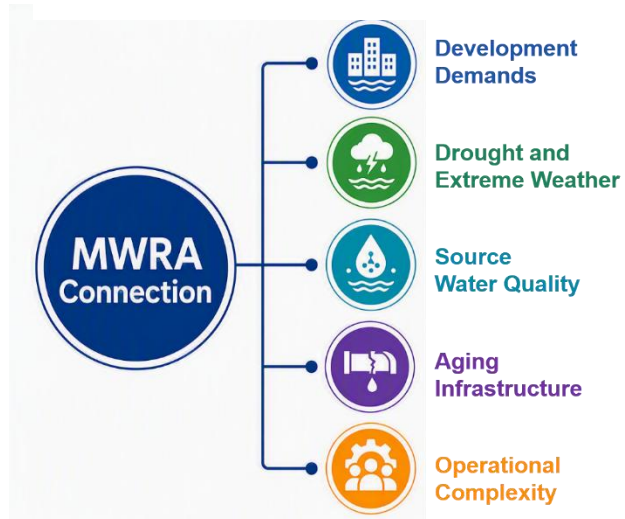


October 2026

1 Introduction

The MetroWest region is comprised of several small and mid-size communities west of Boston, MA, many of which provide for and manage their own individual water supply and related infrastructure. Mirroring trends experienced in other Boston-area regions and throughout Massachusetts, these communities are facing challenges with the availability of water supply to support growth and resiliency (Figure 1). In 2023, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) completed a feasibility study examining the potential expansion of its water system to communities in the MetroWest region. The MWRA study found that a regional connection is technically feasible and identified infrastructure alternatives for extending service into MetroWest. However, the significant cost of that infrastructure—and how those costs might be fairly shared among participating communities—remained an important question.

Figure 1. Study Drivers



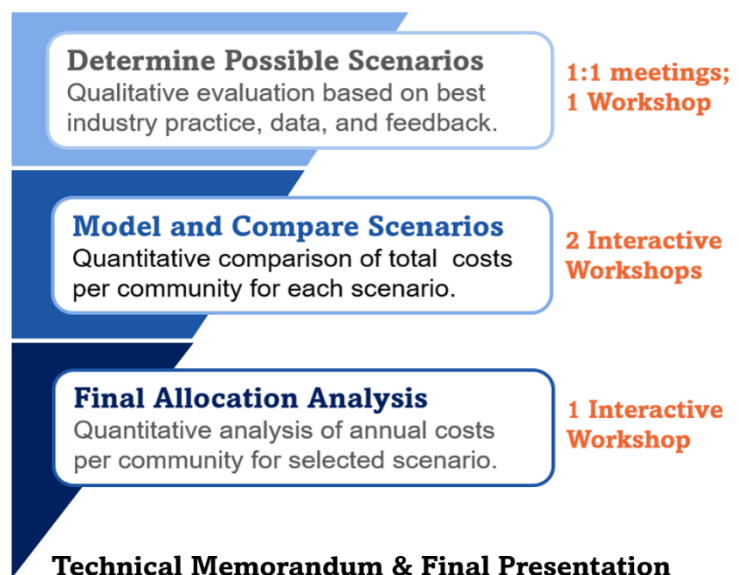
Building on the MWRA work, a nine-community MetroWest coalition worked collaboratively to initiate a cost allocation study of the approximately \$1 billion total infrastructure cost. The MetroWest coalition members include Acton Water District and the towns of Ayer, Bedford, Concord, Groton, Lincoln, Littleton, Maynard, and Westford. The MetroWest-MWRA Connect Cost Allocation Study (the Study) explored approaches to allocating the costs of the potential MWRA connection, developed recommended framework(s) for sharing costs, facilitated education and alignment toward potential future commitments, and offered considerations for next steps.

2 Study Approach

The Study was conducted using a structured three-phase process (Figure 2) designed to evaluate a range of cost allocation methodologies and ultimately identify preferred approaches for sharing the costs of a potential MWRA water supply connection. Technical data from the MWRA Expansion Evaluation, industry cost allocation principles, and extensive stakeholder interviews were used to establish a baseline model and develop a range of potential allocation scenarios.

Community engagement remained a central component throughout the process, with continuous feedback incorporated through interviews, workshops, and discussions that helped build understanding, transparency, and consensus around the recommended cost allocation frameworks.

Figure 1. Study Approach



3 Cost Allocation Analysis

The Study assessed multiple scenarios to understand how different cost allocation approaches and factors influenced the distribution of costs among participating communities. These cost allocation scenarios included Even Split, Demand-Based, Physical Condition, or Blended approaches (Figure 3). Using a \$951.5 million total infrastructure cost, the Study applied these approaches to the proportional cost of storage, pumping, and transmission mains to arrive at a total cost share by community.

Figure 3. Summary of Allocation Approaches

Approach	Best Use Cases	Advantages	Limitations	Cost Causation
Even Split	Shared backbone infrastructure; amount used to set minimum participation or contributions	Simple, transparent, easy to explain and administer; recognizes shared benefit of regional infrastructure	Does not account for differences in demand, usage, or physical system impacts	Weak, if used alone
Demand-Based	Firm supply needs and commitments as infrastructure sized to meet demand	Closely aligns costs with anticipated use of the system	Requires reliable demand projections; may shift costs significantly as demand assumptions change	Strong, widely accepted and defensible
Physical Condition	Dispersed service areas as infrastructure costs driven by hydraulic conditions, distance, or other physical characteristics	Reflects the physical drivers of infrastructure costs	More complex to develop and explain; requires detailed engineering analysis and modeling	Strong, allocates costs based on measurable system impacts
Blended	Systems with multiple drivers and infrastructure components that serve different purposes	Balances shared benefit and cost causation objectives; flexible and adaptable to project-specific conditions	More complex to implement and communicate; weighting decisions can be subjective	Moderate, both shared and community-specific benefits are used to assign costs

Seven (7) scenarios were produced and modeled to represent the range of possible cost share. The Even Split highlighted the general average cost shared equally by each community. Blended approaches reduced the overall variance in capital cost obligation, with communities that could pay less under purely Demand-Based or Physical Condition scenarios helping offset costs for communities that could pay more (Figure 4).

Following development of the seven scenarios, communities participated in a preference survey to identify the cost allocation approaches they felt most appropriately reflected their water supply system needs and perspectives of cost allocation methodologies. Results indicated communities were partial to Blended scenarios rather than scenarios relying exclusively on Equal Split, Demand-Based, or Physical Condition. This suggests that communities generally favored approaches that recognized both the shared regional benefits of the system and accounted for the differing demands or infrastructure needs of individual communities.

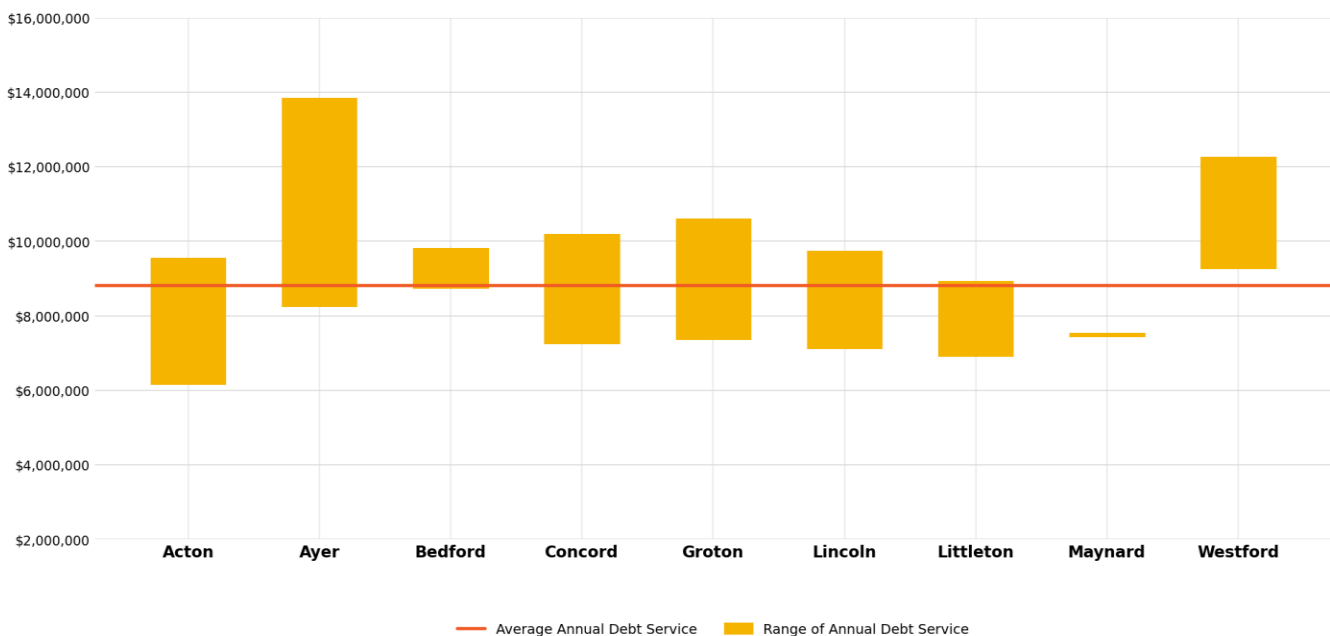
Two (2) scenarios were carried forward for further refinement and technical analysis. Refinements distinguished between infrastructure that provides a shared regional benefit (terminal storage, system pumping, and core transmission mains) and infrastructure more directly related to individual community demand or physical system requirements. Shared infrastructure costs were allocated using an even split among participating communities, reflecting the common access, capacity, and system benefits provided by those facilities. The remaining non-shared infrastructure costs were allocated using demand or physical characteristic factors, as applicable.

Figure 4. Summary of Community Cost Share by Scenario



The scenario refinements also allowed for consideration of phasing and financing to generate an annual cost allocation by community. Phasing carries clear tradeoffs. While it provides certainty that capacity will be available for a community in the future and improves affordability over time, it means communities begin paying for infrastructure prior to access to the supply and are responsible for a higher total capitalized cost due to cost escalation and interest. The Study presented two alternative phasing and financing options, a single-phase and three-phase approach, to illustrate the possible range of annual debt service by community based on the current total infrastructure cost (Figure 5).

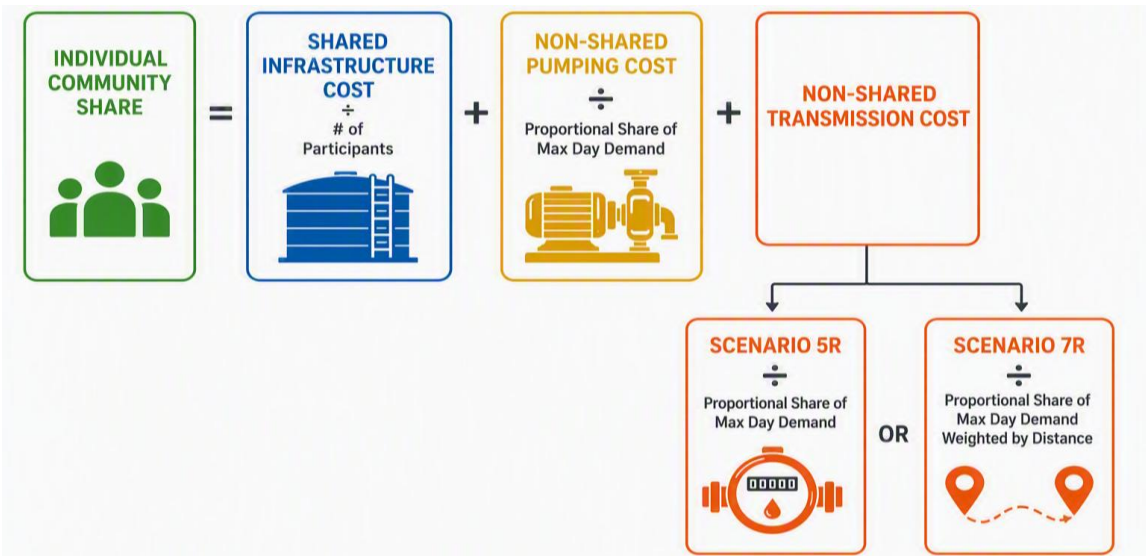
Figure 5. Range of Annual Debt Service for Two Preferred Scenarios



4 Preferred Cost Allocation Framework

Based on the scenario modeling, refinement, and community preferences used throughout the Study, two Blended cost allocation approaches emerged as preferred frameworks (Figure 6). Both frameworks assign shared infrastructure costs evenly among participating communities, while the remaining non-shared pumping and transmission costs are allocated based on each community's specific needs.

Figure 6. Preferred Cost Allocation Frameworks



5 Next Steps

The cost allocation analysis performed in this Study represents planning-level frameworks rather than implementation-ready agreements. It is an initial step in a multi-stage process conceptualized in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Possible Next Steps for the MetroWest Coalition

