

HOUSE No. 00224

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Carolyn C. Dykema and

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the passage of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to the financing of municipal water, waste water and storm water infrastructure.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

James B. Eldridge

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Middlesex and Worcester

HOUSE No. 00224

By Ms. Carolyn C. Dykema of Holliston, petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 00224) of James Eldridge relative to the municipal financing of water, waste water and storm water infrastructure. Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Eleven

An Act relative to the financing of municipal water, waste water and storm water infrastructure.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

- 1 Whereas the Commonwealth relies upon a clean and abundant supply of water to support the
- 2 public health and welfare, to sustain wildlife habitats and fisheries, to provide recreational
- 3 enjoyment of our rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, and salt water resources, to support our
- 4 municipalities, and to encourage the economic growth of the Commonwealth;

- 5 And whereas many communities in the Commonwealth need to address major capital
- 6 improvements of their water, waste water, and storm water treatment systems in order meet new
- 7 state and federal standards, to expand their systems, or to replace aging or degraded
- 8 infrastructure;

- 9 And whereas the financial burden of these improvements falls almost completely on local
- 10 municipal governments and their taxpayers;

11 And whereas in recent months, there have been highly publicized breaks and failures in the water
12 infrastructure of numerous communities across the Commonwealth leading to “boil water”
13 orders, flooding, contamination, and the inconvenience of tearing up of public roads and utilities
14 to effect repairs;

15 And whereas the Water Infrastructure Finance Commission was established by Act of the
16 Legislature pursuant to Section 145 of Chapter 27 of the Acts of 2009 and charged with
17 developing a comprehensive, long range water infrastructure finance plan for the commonwealth
18 and its municipalities;

19 And whereas the Commission held a series of hearings across the state, and welcomed the
20 testimony of municipal officials, water department and water district officials, groups and
21 agencies interested in water policy, environmental and consumer protection groups, professionals
22 in the fields of water supply engineering and pricing, and other interested members of the public
23 to attend;

24 And whereas the Commission is charged with: 1) recommending ways to meet the operation,
25 maintenance, and capital needs of municipal water systems in the Commonwealth; 2)
26 recommending potential changes in local, state, and federal approaches to water infrastructure
27 financing; 3) suggesting fair and equitable means of financing water infrastructure investments,
28 including the role of fees, rates, taxes, loans, grants, and other financial vehicles; 4) evaluating
29 the technical and financial feasibility of sustaining public water systems, conservation and
30 efficiency programs, wastewater systems and storm water systems of municipalities and the
31 commonwealth; 5) evaluating the potential for cost savings through consolidation, coordination,

32 reorganization, or regionalization; and 6) evaluating the potential for cost savings through
33 innovations in water technology;

34 Now therefore the Commission recommends changes to certain laws of the Commonwealth,
35 including but not limited to: existing and potential mechanisms, programs, and sources of
36 funding for investing in municipal and district water, wastewater and storm water infrastructure
37 (including as examples fees, rates, loans, betterments, and other potential revenues); innovative
38 and green treatment technologies; and the governance of municipal, regional, and district water
39 storm water and wastewater systems.