

HOUSE No. 690

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Robert M. Koczera

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 adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to water and sewer rate relief.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Robert M. Koczera

11th Bristol

Joan B. Lovely

Second Essex

HOUSE No. 690

By Mr. Koczera of New Bedford, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 690) of Robert M. Koczera and Joan B. Lovely relative to the water and sewer rate relief program for certain homeowners administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development. Housing.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninetieth General Court
(2017-2018)**

An Act relative to water and sewer rate relief.

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

1 SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any general or specific law or regulation to the contrary,
2 Chapter 23B of the Massachusetts General Laws, as so appearing in the 2014 Official Edition, is
3 hereby amended by replacing Section 24B with a new Section 24B as follows:

4 Section 24B. The department shall, subject to appropriation, operate a low-income sewer
5 and water assistance program to provide assistance in paying the sewer and water bills of
6 homeowners who are eligible for the Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program, so called,
7 created by the Low-income Home Energy Assistance Act, 42 United States Code sections 8621
8 et seq., or any successor acts thereto. Said program may be administered in coordination with
9 the Low-income Home Energy Assistance Act, 42 United States Code sections 8621 et seq., or
10 any successor acts thereto, subject to the following provisions: shall establish benefit rates and
11 maximum benefits such that total benefits paid do not exceed the amount appropriated for this
12 benefit;

13

14 (a) the department shall use the same grantee agencies, similar applications and similar
15 verification procedures as are used in the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, to the
16 maximum extent possible. Grantee agencies shall utilize a reasonable percentage of any funds
17 appropriated, not exceeding 10 per cent of such funds, for administrative costs of the program.

18 (b) the benefit level provided to any individual household eligible under this program
19 shall not be greater than 25 per cent of the total annual water and sewer bill for the household;
20 provided, however, that the department shall establish benefit rates and maximum benefits such
21 that total benefits paid do not exceed the amount appropriated for this benefit.

22 (c) households which receive benefits under this program shall not unreasonably refuse to
23 cooperate with any demand-side water conservation programs which are provided at no expense
24 to the household by any local agency or authority.