



**Testimony submitted to the
Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
In Support of S.476 An Act improving municipal water infrastructure
By Carolyn Lee, LWVMA Specialist on Natural Resources
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Massachusetts is in some regions a densely populated state. While we have an overall abundance of water, sometimes water isn't always readily available to a local municipality. Development can and has stretched municipal water resources beyond their capabilities. New developments can strain infrastructure and add substantially to municipal costs in ways that are borne by those communities long after the developer has completed a project. Adoption of this bill will provide much-needed added resources for municipalities to help them comply with environmental regulations and maintain or upgrade their infrastructure to meet the increasing needs caused by development. Currently, the only way to do this assesses all property in the water authority equally. That method doesn't require any new development to shoulder its fair share of the added burden which it has created on water resources.

Water authorities already have the authority, if they opt in, to collect fees into a "Municipal Water Infrastructure Trust Fund," a surcharge on existing real property for maintenance of water infrastructure assets.

This bill allows for a municipality to also opt into a "water-banking fee" system, allowing the municipal water authority to collect a fee up front for new developments. That fee can be used exclusively for all water infrastructure-related projects. These funds would, therefore, be available to cope with the effects of development. Since the bill also allows the fees to be based on the net impairment to the water system caused by the development, its adoption will encourage developers to use best methods to minimize water consumption, waste water release and storm water mitigation.

Last session this bill was reported favorably out of committee and stalled in Senate Ways and Means. Let's get this passed this session, so that all municipalities know they can protect their water infrastructure when development occurs.

Since 1983, the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts has supported means to protect our critical water resources and to repair and rehabilitate water systems. That is exactly what this bill does.

The LWVMA supports this bill and asks that you favorably report this bill out of committee. Please make certain that this year this legislation is enacted.

Thank you for your consideration.