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July 29, 2021

The Honorable John Cronin, Senate Chair
 The Honorable Lori Ehrlich, House Chair
 Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government
 State House, Room 540
 Boston, MA 02133

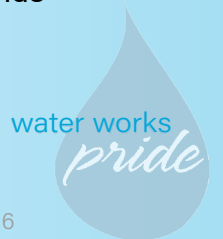
RE: Written Testimony - HB 2198 - An Act Relative to the Protection of Wetlands and Water Resources in Chapter 40B Applications

Via email to: municipalitiescommitteema@gmail.com

Dear Chairs Cronin and Ehrlich, and Members of the Committee:

Massachusetts Water Works Association (MWWA) appreciates the opportunity to provide the following written testimony in support of House Bill 2198, An Act Relative to the Protection of Wetlands and Water Resources in Chapter 40B Applications. MWWA represents over 1,300 water supply professionals throughout the Commonwealth. Our membership consists of water operators, water system managers, consulting engineers, equipment manufacturers and vendors. It is our members' responsibility to provide clean, safe drinking water to the Commonwealth's residents. Water suppliers are environmentalists concerned about the water resources they manage and protect for without adequate protection they will not be able to provide this most essential service.

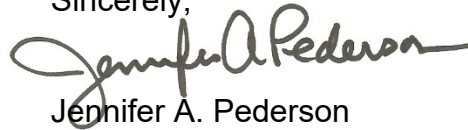
Massachusetts' water suppliers face very stringent regulations regarding water quality and water quantity in Massachusetts. Some communities have more stringent wetlands protection bylaws than the state because they understand the importance of protecting wetlands to ensure a well-functioning hydrologic system. Wetlands play an important role in capturing flow from storm events and provide opportunities for recharge of groundwater into aquifers. Public Water Systems do not have many tools to protect their sources outside of not allowing certain activities within a discreet radius around their source (Zone 1 for groundwater sources, Zone A for surface water sources). Efforts to protect local water resources through strong wetlands protection bylaws give some additional benefit to the overall hydrologic cycle. House Bill 2198 would protect wetland and water resources areas by restoring the local discretion to enforce wetlands and water resource protection bylaws under Chapter 40B.



There are issues surrounding the introduction of contaminants to the environment, and the environment's ability to buffer those contaminants, wetlands help in that effort. Public Water Systems are increasingly concerned about the impact of emerging contaminants on water supplies, which may be exacerbated by development activities. As an example, Massachusetts just promulgated both drinking water and waste site cleanup standards for Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) at 20 parts per trillion. PFAS are found in many consumer products and there is concern that septic systems and groundwater discharges could be contributing to contamination of groundwater in Massachusetts. While there is still a lot to be understood about how PFAS travels through the environment, it is clear that we are seeing an impact by the number of water systems detecting PFAS in their drinking water sources. For reasons such as this, it would behoove the Commonwealth for decisions about siting of development to be handled at the local level so that those most familiar with water resource concerns in a community can take appropriate action to protect those resources.

MWWA urges the Committee to give House Bill 2198 a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer A. Pederson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Jennifer A. Pederson
Executive Director