

SENATE No. 2812

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)

SENATE, June 10, 2024.

The committee on Environment and Natural Resources, to whom was referred the petitions (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 447) of Joanne M. Comerford for legislation relative to the Quabbin watershed and regional equity; and (accompanied by bill, House, No. 897) of Aaron L. Saunders and others relative to the Quabbin watershed and regional equity, report the accompanying bill (Senate, No. 2812).

For the committee,
Rebecca L. Rausch

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)**

An Act relative to the Quabbin watershed and regional equity.

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. Chapter 10 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after
2 section 35SSS the following section:-

3 Section 35TTT. (a) There shall be established and set up on the books of the
4 commonwealth a separate fund to be known as the Quabbin host community trust fund to be
5 used, without further appropriation, by the secretary of energy and environmental affairs for the
6 municipal service, public safety, and development needs of Quabbin reservoir watershed
7 communities, as defined by the department of conservation and recreation, including, but not
8 limited to, lands authorized to be taken under chapter 321 of the acts of 1927 or any successor
9 statute granting the taking of land for a similar purpose. All funds assessed and collected under
10 section 21 of chapter 92A½ shall be deposited into the fund. Any balance in the fund at the end
11 of the fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund but shall remain available for expenditure in
12 subsequent fiscal years. No expenditure made from the fund shall cause the fund to become
13 deficient at any point during a fiscal year. Annually, not later than October 1, the secretary shall
14 file with the clerks of the senate and house of representatives and the house and senate

15 committees on ways and means a report of the fund's activities, including but not limited to
16 expenditures made and income received by the fund.

17 (b) The secretary shall establish rules and regulations for the administration of the fund.

18 SECTION 2. The third paragraph of section 5G of chapter 59 of the General Laws is
19 hereby amended by striking out the second and third sentences and inserting in place thereof the
20 following sentences:- Said amounts to be held in trust as payments in lieu of taxes shall be made
21 on the total acreage in question that is held by each community; provided however, that the sum
22 of said payments shall not be less than \$50,000 annually, and shall be valued in accordance with
23 the provisions of sections 13 to 17, inclusive, of chapter 58. In no event shall any city or town
24 receive an amount less than the payment received from the metropolitan district commission in
25 the prior fiscal year.

26 SECTION 3. Chapter 92A^{1/2} of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the
27 following section:-

28 Section 21. Annually on or before August 15, the executive director of the Massachusetts
29 Water Resources Authority shall certify to the department the water usage by gallons drawn from
30 the Quabbin reservoir for the previous fiscal year. Not later than October 1, the department shall
31 assess the Authority a fee based on the total gallons drawn from the reservoir; provided,
32 however, that the department shall promulgate regulations to determine the assessment amount.

33 SECTION 4. The first sentence of subsection (d) of said section 3 of said chapter 372 is
34 hereby amended by inserting after the word "reappointment" the following words:- ; provided,
35 however, that no member of the board of directors shall serve for more than 12 years, except the
36 secretary of the executive office of environmental affairs, serving ex officio.

37 SECTION 5. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, no later than
38 December 31, 2025, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority shall complete a water
39 system expansion evaluation of the Westfield River Basin communities, Chicopee River Basin
40 communities, Connecticut River Basin communities, and Millers River Basin communities in a
41 manner consistent with the Evaluation of Ipswich River Basin completed by the Authority in
42 October 2022. The evaluation shall be made available on the Massachusetts Water Resources
43 Authority's website and a copy shall be filed with the clerks of the house and senate and the
44 house and senate chairs of the committee on environment and natural resources.

45 SECTION 6. Sections 1 and 3 of this act shall take effect on January 1, 2025.