
■ Letter to the Legislator

Dear Senator Barrett,

Your office has the opportunity to protect Massachusetts rivers, wildlife, and water supplies for generations. Last year, Massachusetts experienced drought that affected the entire state, and these drought conditions will continue to worsen as climate change persists. As you are the Vice Chair for the Senate Committee on Global Warming and Climate Change, I understand that the effects of climate change are of great concern to you. As residents of Massachusetts, we are asking for good stewardship over our public resources.

Right now, the state has a fragmented drought system. Each town in each region has the authority to decide what water conservation methods regarding non-essential outdoor use to require during a drought. For example, the town of Waltham could require a total ban on any and all lawn watering, while a town over, Lexington could have no ban at all. Since these two towns are a part of the same region, they are getting their water from the same suffering water source during a drought, which means one town is taking more water than the other and depleting the region's water source, which is not fair. Every town should be held to the same standard when it comes to a shared resource and in this instance, water conservation should be uniform across regions.

The Drought Bill proposes the unification of Massachusetts under one water policy which would cause a net positive effect on the state's water sources. According to the language of the bill, the Drought Management Task Force would have the authority to enact two things. First, the task force could declare drought conditions and subsequent water restrictions without waiting for the governor to declare a drought emergency. Second, those restrictions would apply to an entire region that is being affected by a drought, rather than towns deciding for themselves. These measures are absolutely necessary in order to prevent a water emergency in Massachusetts.

There is widespread support for this bill across the state. Young people wish to mitigate the effects of climate change by having plans set in place to protect our water. Advocates wish to maintain the sanctity of Massachusetts water sources, and local farmers need to ensure that they will always have enough water to maintain their crops. There is not enough support in the climate deniers organization to stop the momentum of this bill.

I implore you to vote favorably for the Drought Bill during this session and pass this necessary law to protect Massachusetts water sources.

Sincerely,

Gianna Bruno & Amelia Chen