

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
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PRESS RELEASE

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**Gobi and Ashe Chair First Meeting of
Special Commission Studying Crumbling Foundations**

BOSTON- **Senator Anne Gobi (D-Spencer)** and **Representative Brian Ashe (D- Longmeadow)** were proud to Co-Chair the first meeting of the special commission studying the issue of crumbling concrete foundations in Massachusetts, which are deteriorating as a result of the presence of a mineral known as pyrrhotite in the concrete aggregate, on Monday evening at Bay Path University in Longmeadow. The commission was established through an amendment, submitted by Senator Eric Lesser (D-Longmeadow), to the FY19 State Budget- and is tasked with examining the scope and potential financial/economic impact the issue will have on the homeowners and the Commonwealth.

When asked for comment on the meeting Senator Gobi had this to say: “We have a difficult task before us but it is one that is necessary in order to gauge the scope of the problem and to make recommendations and take actions that will be of assistance to homeowners and preserve the integrity of our communities.”

“The Commission's first meeting was a great starting point and I look forward to working with everyone involved. We have a great mix of individuals who each provide critical experience that will help find solutions for homeowners who are dealing with crumbling concrete due to pyrrhotite,” stated Representative Ashe. “We have a lot of work to do, but I am confident the commission will do all it can to get some relief for affected homeowners”.

The damage, described as spider or web-cracking, is caused by an iron sulfide called pyrrhotite that begins to degrade when exposed to water and oxygen. While the mineral is rare, reports found that all the concrete in question originated from the same quarry and supply company, JJ Mottes Concrete and Septic Supply located in Stafford, Connecticut. It is believed that an estimated 34,000 homes in Connecticut alone are affected.

The commission consists of an 11-member panel from varying backgrounds that are tasked with several items, including:

- Examining the degree to which concrete foundations are crumbling due to the presence of pyrrhotite in the commonwealth.
- Estimating the cost to fully restore concrete foundations damaged due to the presence of pyrrhotite.
- Analyzing the effect the presence of pyrrhotite has on property values and the resulting fiscal impact on property tax revenues.
- Providing an analysis of the impact on the real estate industry.
- Review of the best practices undertaken in other states which have faced this issue.

At this inaugural meeting the chairs began by reviewing the charge of the commission as defined in statute and the open meeting requirements for subsequent meetings, voting to ensure that future gatherings would be open for public observance with written testimony being accepted. From here the group moved to a discussion of workflow steps and process to narrow down their objectives while dividing tasks based on each individual's expertise. The meeting adjourned with a group photo and the decision to meet again in the evening on Monday, June 10th at the Town Hall in Monson, MA.

The commission must submit a report with recommendations, together with drafts of legislation to carry its recommendations into effect, with the Clerks of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

In addition to the establishment of this commission, Senator Gobi advocated successfully for the inclusion of a reimbursement program in the FY 19 budget that offers those afflicted a slight amount of immediate relief. Administered by the Division of Professional Licensure, homeowners may be reimbursed at a rate of 100% for visual testing conducted by a licensed professional engineer up to \$400 and a rate of 75% for the testing of two core samples up to \$5000.

For more information on the commission or reimbursement program, please contact Senator Gobi's office at (617) 722-1540.



Pictured (Left to right): Vincent Walsh, Senator Anne Gobi, Michelle Loglisci, Representative Brian Ashe, Representative Todd Smola, Russell Dupere, Gabrielle Viator, Stephen Crane, and Douglas Brunner

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