

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Gobi Announces Passage of Water Infrastructure Bill

Boston, MA – Representative Anne Gobi (D-Spencer) and her colleagues in the House of Representatives voted unanimously to pass House Bill 4212, An Act Improving Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure. The bill addresses the long ignored issue of a deteriorating water infrastructure across the Commonwealth.

Representative Gobi worked hand in hand with her colleagues, molding the bill into what has been voted on favorably by her fellow Representatives. Commented Rep. Gobi: “Clean water is a precious commodity and this bill helps to strengthen important partnerships with our towns to make sure that water is delivered safely and waste is dealt with effectively while instituting new technologies and approaches for more cost effective water infrastructure.”

One of the major impacts of this legislation is on the local level. The bill provides financial assistance to cities and towns for drinking water, wastewater and storm water facilities including \$3 million in funding for planning and technical assistance grants and \$50 million added to the State Revolving Fund Loan Program run by the Treasurer’s Office. The SRF provides loans to municipalities for drinking water, wastewater and storm water facilities and improvements. The bill also allows communities to reduce the interest rate on loans through the SRF program from 2% to as low as 0%.

The bill also creates important reform, requiring the SRF to establish and publish guidelines for municipalities on best management practices in water infrastructure management. This will benefit municipalities by helping them achieve the greatest value for their infrastructure investments. The establishment of a commission to make recommendations on ways to better coordinate road repair during repair and replacement of underground utilities was included in the bill as well, aiming to save cities and towns money as they replace aging infrastructure.

In addition to helping mediate the cost of water infrastructure fixes, this legislation will also boost job creation. The Commonwealth will immediately see increases in jobs for infrastructure planning, construction, engineering and other labor. This will also create jobs in the long term. The bill expands the scope of the Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) to include water innovation, providing the organization with \$1.5 million to leverage private investment by local water innovation companies and startups. This initiative will support a growing cluster of water innovation companies in Massachusetts that can create in state jobs by filling a \$960 billion global need for better water management technologies.

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