



Andrew Gottlieb
Executive Director

April 26, 2023

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Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Room 218 & Room 473F

State House

Boston, MA 02133

**RE: An Act Relative to Maintaining Adequate Water Supplies Through
Effective Drought Management (S.475/H.861)**

Dear Chair Rausch and Chair Cahill:

The Association to Preserve Cape Cod (APCC) submits this written testimony in strong support of An Act Relative to Maintaining Adequate Water Supplies Through Effective Drought Management (S.475/H.861) and respectfully urges the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources to report this bill out with a favorable recommendation.

Founded in 1968, APCC is the Cape region's leading nonprofit environmental advocacy and education organization, working for the adoption of laws, policies and programs that protect, preserve and restore Cape Cod's natural resources. APCC focuses our efforts on the protection of groundwater, surface water, and wetland resources, preservation of open space, the promotion of responsible, planned growth and the achievement of an environmental ethic.

After experiencing the adverse effects of an extended period of significant drought on much of Cape Cod from 2020 through 2022 that caused severe drops in pond water levels and put strains on municipal water supplies—and with the expectation that climate change will cause more drought occurrences in the future—it is apparent that the Commonwealth must set in place strategies for responding early and uniformly to drought occurrences in order to help minimize their impacts on the environment and human health. S.475/H.861 provides the necessary mechanism for this to occur.

S.475/H.861 is commonsense legislation that gives the Commonwealth clear

authority to order appropriate, timely drought response to affected regions of the state. It enables Massachusetts to implement drought management policy in a proactive manner instead of the ineffective, reactive approach that exists under current law. Specifically, S.475/H.861 provides the Commonwealth with the authority to require water conservation during times of drought. Such water conservation measures would be applied in a consistent manner to nonessential water use within a designated drought region, with an exemption for agriculture and other specified essential water users.

This bill provides much-needed improvements to Massachusetts' drought management policies by giving the Commonwealth the authority required to help ensure the ongoing sustainability of our highly valued water resources, including our drinking water supplies, ponds, streams and other wetlands. Adoption of S.475/H.861 into law will give us the means to prepare our state for the challenges of a climate future that will include longer and more frequent droughts. APCC requests that the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources act swiftly in moving this bill forward in the legislative process.

APCC thanks the chairs and members of the committee for their consideration of this important bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Gottlieb', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Andrew Gottlieb
Executive Director

cc: Senator Julian Cyr
 Senator Susan Moran
 Representative Sarah Peake
 Representative Christopher Flanagan
 Representative Kip Diggs
 Representative David Vieira
 Representative Dylan Fernandes
 Representative Steven Xiarhos
 Representative Joan Meschino
 Senator Jamie Eldridge