



Andrew Gottlieb
Executive Director

March 4, 2024

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The Honorable Michael J. Rodrigues, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

24 Beacon St.

Room 212

Boston, MA 02133

RE: Support for An Act Relative to Maintaining Adequate Water Supplies Through Effective Drought Management (S.475)

Dear Chair Rodrigues:

The Association to Preserve Cape Cod (APCC) writes in strong support of An Act Relative to Maintaining Adequate Water Supplies Through Effective Drought Management (S.475) and respectfully urges the Senate Committee on Ways and Means to move this bill forward for passage this session.

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.

Much of Cape Cod and other regions of Massachusetts have experienced the adverse effects of extended periods of significant drought within the past several years that caused severe drops in pond and stream water levels and put strains on municipal water supplies. With the expectation that our growing climate crisis 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, economy and human health. S.475 provides the necessary mechanism for this to occur.

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S.475 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 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 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 Senate Committee on Ways and Means act swiftly in advancing this bill for a vote by the full Senate.

Thank you and the members of the committee for your consideration of this important bill.

Sincerely,



Andrew Gottlieb
Executive Director

cc: Senator Julian Cyr
Senator Susan Moran
Senator James Eldridge

