



June 4, 2025

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Executive Director

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The Honorable Rebecca L. Rausch, Senate Chair
The Honorable Christine P. Barber, House Chair
Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Room 215 & Room 167
State House
Boston, MA 02133

RE: An Act Relative to Maintaining Adequate Water Supplies Through Effective Drought Management (S.586/H.1003)

Dear Chair Rausch and Chair Barber:

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.586/H.1003) 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.

Cape Cod has experienced the adverse effects of several extended periods of serious drought during the past several years that caused severe drops in the water levels of freshwater ponds and streams and put strains on municipal water supplies. Yet despite sharing the same source of water, Cape communities have failed to respond to these situations in a regionally cohesive manner. And with the Cape region coming into the 2025 summer season under another Level 2 Significant Drought designation, coupled with the expectation that climate change will cause even more drought occurrences in the future on the Cape and in other parts of the state, it is apparent that Massachusetts must set in place strategies for responding early and uniformly to drought in order to help minimize its

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impacts on the environment and human health. S.586/H.1003 provides the necessary mechanism for this to occur.

S.586/H.1003 is commonsense legislation that gives Massachusetts clear authority to establish an appropriate, timely drought response to affected regions of the state. It enables the Commonwealth to implement drought management policy in a proactive manner instead of the ineffective, reactive and uneven approach that exists under current state policy. Specifically, S.586/H.1003 provides the Commonwealth with the authority to enact 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.586/H.1003 into law will give us the means to prepare our state for the challenges of a climate future that will include longer, more frequent, and more severe 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,



Andrew Gottlieb
Executive Director

cc: Senator Julian Cyr
Senator Dylan Fernandes
Representative Hadley Luddy
Representative Christopher Flanagan
Representative Kip Diggs
Representative David Vieira
Representative Thomas Moakley
Representative Steven Xiarhos
Representative Joan Meschino
Senator James Eldridge