SENATE DOCKET, NO. 524 FILED ON: 1/19/2011

SENATE . . . . . No. 351

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

James B. Eldridge

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to municipal water, waste water, and storm water infrastructure.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
James B. Eldridge	
Carolyn C. Dykema	*8th Middlesex*

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SENATE . . . . . No. 351

By Mr. Eldridge, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 351) of James B. Eldridge and Carolyn C. Dykema for legislation relative to municipal water, waste water, and storm water infrastructure . Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Eleven

An Act relative to municipal water, waste water, and storm water infrastructure.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

Whereas the Commonwealth relies upon a clean and abundant supply of water to support the public health and welfare, to sustain wildlife habitats and fisheries, to provide recreational enjoyment of our rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, and salt water resources, to support our municipalities, and to encourage the economic growth of the Commonwealth;

And whereas many communities in the Commonwealth need to address major capital improvements of their water, waste water, and storm water treatment systems in order meet new state and federal standards, to expand their systems, or to replace aging or degraded infrastructure;

And whereas the financial burden of these improvements falls almost completely on local municipal governments and their taxpayers;

And whereas in recent months, there have been highly publicized breaks and failures in the water infrastructure of numerous communities across the Commonwealth leading to ?boil

water? orders, flooding, contamination, and the inconvenience of tearing up of public roads and utilities to effect repairs;

And whereas the Water Infrastructure Finance Commission was established by Act of the Legislature pursuant to Section 145 of Chapter 27 of the Acts of 2009 and charged with developing a comprehensive, long range water infrastructure finance plan for the commonwealth and its municipalities;

And whereas the Commission held a series of hearings across the state, and welcomed the testimony of municipal officials, water department and water district officials, groups and agencies interested in water policy, environmental and consumer protection groups, professionals in the fields of water supply engineering and pricing, and other interested members of the public to attend;

And whereas the Commission is charged with: 1) recommending ways to meet the operation, maintenance, and capital needs of municipal water systems in the Commonwealth; 2) recommending potential changes in local, state, and federal approaches to water infrastructure financing; 3) suggesting fair and equitable means of financing water infrastructure investments, including the role of fees, rates, taxes, loans, grants, and other financial vehicles; 4) evaluating the technical and financial feasibility of sustaining public water systems, conservation and efficiency programs, wastewater systems and storm water systems of municipalities and the commonwealth; 5) evaluating the potential for cost savings through consolidation, coordination, reorganization, or regionalization; and 6) evaluating the potential for cost savings through innovations in water technology;

Now therefore the Commission recommends changes to certain laws of the Commonwealth, including but not limited to: existing and potential mechanisms, programs, and sources of funding for investing in municipal and district water, waste water and storm water infrastructure (including as examples, fees, rates, loans, betterments, and other potential revenues); innovative and green treatment technologies; and the governance of municipal, regional, and district water, storm water, and wastewater systems.