SENATE DOCKET, NO. 1317 FILED ON: 2/16/2021

SENATE . . . . . No. 530

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 maintaining adequate water supplies through effective drought management.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
James B. Eldridge	*Middlesex and Worcester*	
Carolyn C. Dykema	*8th Middlesex*	
Michael J. Barrett	*Third Middlesex*	*2/25/2021*
Joanne M. Comerford	*Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester*	*3/5/2021*
Carmine Lawrence Gentile	*13th Middlesex*	*3/8/2021*
Michael O. Moore	*Second Worcester*	*3/9/2021*
Michael D. Brady	*Second Plymouth and Bristol*	*3/16/2021*
Jason M. Lewis	*Fifth Middlesex*	*3/18/2021*
Sal N. DiDomenico	*Middlesex and Suffolk*	*3/23/2021*
Walter F. Timilty	*Norfolk, Bristol and Plymouth*	*4/16/2021*
Brendan P. Crighton	*Third Essex*	*12/10/2021*

SENATE DOCKET, NO. 1317 FILED ON: 2/16/2021

SENATE . . . . . No. 530

By Mr. Eldridge, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 530) of James B. Eldridge, Carolyn C. Dykema, Michael J. Barrett, Joanne M. Comerford and other members of the General Court for legislation relative to maintaining adequate water supplies through effective drought management. Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court
(2021-2022)

An Act relative to maintaining adequate water supplies through effective drought management.

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

Chapter 21A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2018 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after section 2A the following section:-

Section 2B. (a) There shall be established within the office the drought management task force. The secretary and the director of the Massachusetts emergency management agency shall appoint to the task force officials from state agencies and professional organizations with responsibility for areas likely to be affected by drought conditions; representatives of agencies that provide data used to assess drought conditions or that have the ability to respond to drought conditions; and public health and safety and environmental professionals, and may invite officials from federal agencies to participate. The secretary and the director shall have joint responsibility for coordinating the task force. The task force shall meet at least quarterly, but it shall meet at least monthly during drought. The task force shall be staffed by a director appointed by the secretary.

(b) The task force shall assist in collecting and assessing technical information, facilitating coordination and communication among task force members, agencies and the public, and provide recommendations to the secretary, the secretary of public safety and security and the governor on the level of drought and responses thereto. The task force shall also make recommendations for the end of drought, or reduction of the drought level.

(c) The task force shall maintain and periodically update a statewide drought management plan that addresses preparedness and response to drought conditions and protects public health, public safety, and the environment. The task force may update the statewide drought management plan at any time; provided, that the plan shall be updated at least every 5 years.

(d) The secretary may order water conservation measures, including limits on nonessential outdoor water use, based on the severity of drought in drought regions to protect public health, safety or the environment. Such water conservation measures by the secretary shall apply uniformly to all water users within a drought region.

(e) Notwithstanding section 27C of chapter 29 of the General Laws or any ordinance, by-law, rule or regulation to the contrary, cities and towns shall enforce, water conservation restrictions issued by the secretary to the fullest extent permitted by law.