

HOUSE No. 905

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Dawne Shand and Bruce E. Tarr

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 to create a Merrimack River collaborative.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Dawne Shand</i>	<i>1st Essex</i>	<i>1/20/2023</i>
<i>Bruce E. Tarr</i>	<i>First Essex and Middlesex</i>	<i>1/20/2023</i>
<i>Ryan M. Hamilton</i>	<i>15th Essex</i>	<i>4/12/2023</i>
<i>Kristin E. Kassner</i>	<i>2nd Essex</i>	<i>4/12/2023</i>
<i>Adrienne Pusateri Ramos</i>	<i>14th Essex</i>	<i>6/29/2023</i>
<i>Tram T. Nguyen</i>	<i>18th Essex</i>	<i>6/29/2023</i>

HOUSE No. 905

By Representative Shand of Newburyport and Senator Tarr, a joint petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 905) of Dawne Shand and Bruce E. Tarr for legislation to establish a Merrimack River collaborative. Environment and Natural Resources.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)**

An Act to create a Merrimack River collaborative.

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

- 1 There shall be a Merrimack River Collaborative to serve as a coordinating entity for
- 2 efforts
- 3 associated with the health of the Merrimack River in order to monitor, improve, and
- 4 restore
- 5 water quality. The Commission shall employ methods and strategies to advance the
- 6 following
- 7 goals:
- 8 (i) Convene and maintain a working group associated with addressing water quality in the
- 9 Merrimack River
- 10 (ii) Improve public education and access to information regarding Merrimack River water
- 11 quality

12 (iii) Advance the standardization and availability of water quality monitoring data along
13 the river

14 (iv) Advance knowledge and monitoring efforts of known and emerging pollutants

15 (v) Identify and support legislation and priority implementation projects to improve water
16 quality

17 (vi) Connect MRC members and associated communities with grant and other funding
18 opportunities aligned with MRC goals.

19 The Merrimack Valley Planning Commission shall be charged with managing and
20 overseeing the Collaborative in collaboration with the Merrimack River Watershed Council and
21 the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments. The Collaborative shall consist of members or
22 designees that may include, but will not be limited to, representation from the following: Federal
23 and State legislative offices, Municipal Mayors, Town Managers, and Town Administrators as
24 well as their Boards of Health and Conservation Commissions representing communities along
25 the Merrimack River, State entities including the Department of Environmental Protection,
26 Department of Public Health, and the Massbays National Estuary Partnership, Non-
27 Governmental Organizations including the Alliance of Climate and Environmental
28 Stewards, Groundwork Lawrence, and Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust, and local
29 Universities

30 including University of Massachusetts Lowell and Northern Essex Community College.
31 The Commission shall solicit membership from analogous organizations with similar missions
32 along the New Hampshire component of the Merrimack River.

33 Appointments to the Collaborative shall be made not later than 30 days after the effective
34 date of this act. Each proposed member organization shall be approved by the designated
35 convening bodies. Following approval, the chief executive officer of each member organization
36 shall

37 appoint themselves or a representative to serve as a member of the Collaborative
38 Members shall not receive compensation for their services associated with Merrimack River
39 Collaborative.

40 The Collaborative may select and contract with independent consultants to assist with
41 leading and managing public hearings, collecting, and analyzing data and information,
42 completing yearly reports, and any other activities to achieve the goals of the Collaborative.

43 The Collaborative may conduct a series of public hearings to receive testimony and
44 collect data. The hearings shall be held in geographic locations bordering the Merrimack River.
45 The Collaborative shall produce an annual report. This report shall address accomplishments to
46 date, outline forthcoming efforts as related to the Collaborative's overarching goals, and make
47 recommendations regarding appropriate measures to ensure the present and future health of the
48 Merrimack River.

49 The Collaborative shall submit an annual report documenting its accomplishments and
50 forthcoming efforts no later than December 15th of each year. This report, together with any
51 proposed legislation, shall be submitted to the clerks of the Senate and House of Representatives.