SENATE DOCKET, NO. 701 FILED ON: 1/17/2023

SENATE . . . . . No. 586

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

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:	
Bruce E. Tarr	*First Essex and Middlesex*	
Pavel Payano	*First Essex*	*3/31/2023*

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SENATE . . . . . No. 586

By Mr. Tarr, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 586) of Bruce E. Tarr for legislation relative to create 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:

SECTION 1. There shall be a Merrimack River Collaborative to serve as a coordinating entity for efforts associated with the health of the Merrimack River in order to monitor, improve, and restore water quality. The Commission shall employ methods and strategies to advance the following goals:

(i) Convene and maintain a working group associated with addressing water quality in the Merrimack River

(ii) Improve public education and access to information regarding Merrimack River water quality

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

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

12 (v) Identify and support legislation and priority implementation projects to improve water
13 quality

14 (vi) Connect MRC members and associated communities with grant and other funding
15 opportunities aligned with MRC goals

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

29 Appointments to the Collaborative shall be made not later than 30 days after the effective
30 date of this act. Each proposed member organization shall be approved by the designated
31 convening bodies. Following approval, the chief executive officer of each member organization
32 shall appoint themselves or a representative to serve as a member of the Collaborative. Members
33 shall not receive compensation for their services associated with Merrimack River Collaborative.

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

37 The Collaborative may conduct a series of public hearings to receive testimony and
38 collect data. The hearings shall be held in geographic locations bordering the Merrimack River.

39 The Collaborative shall produce an annual report. This report shall address
40 accomplishments to date, outline forthcoming efforts as related to the Collaborative's
41 overarching goals, and make recommendations regarding appropriate measures to ensure the
42 present and future health of the Merrimack River. The Collaborative shall submit an annual
43 report documenting its accomplishments and forthcoming efforts no later than December 15th of
44 each year, beginning on December 15th, 2023.

45 This report, together with any proposed legislation, shall be submitted to the clerks of the
46 Senate and House of Representatives. The first meeting of the Collaborative shall be no later
47 than May 1st, 2023.