

SENATE No. 894

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Mark C. Montigny

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 provide sewer and water rate relief.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Mark C. Montigny

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Second Bristol and Plymouth

SENATE No. 894

By Mr. Montigny, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 894) of Mark C. Montigny for legislation to establish a low-income sewer and water assistance program. Housing.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE, NO. 901 OF 2021-2022.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act to provide sewer and water rate relief.

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

1 SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any general or specific law to the contrary, section 24B of
2 chapter 23B of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, is hereby amended
3 by striking out in its entirety and inserting in place thereof the following new text:-

4 Section 24B. The department shall, subject to appropriation, operate a low-income sewer
5 and water assistance program to provide assistance in paying the sewer and water bills of
6 homeowners who are eligible for the Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program, so called,
7 created by the Low-income Home Energy Assistance Act, 42 United States Code sections 8621
8 et seq., or any successor acts thereto. Said program may be administered in coordination with the
9 Low-income Home Energy Assistance Act, 42 United States Code sections 8621 et seq., or any
10 successor acts thereto, subject to the following provisions: shall establish benefit rates and

11 maximum benefits such that total benefits paid do not exceed the amount appropriated for this
12 benefit;

13 (a) the department shall use the same grantee agencies, similar applications and similar
14 verification procedures as are used in the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, to the
15 maximum extent possible. Grantee agencies shall utilize a reasonable percentage of any funds
16 appropriated, not exceeding 10 per cent of such funds, for administrative costs of the program.

17 (b) the benefit level provided to any individual household eligible under this program
18 shall not be greater than 25 per cent of the total annual water and sewer bill for the household;
19 provided, however, that the department shall establish benefit rates and maximum benefits such
20 that total benefits paid do not exceed the amount appropriated for this benefit.

21 (c) households which receive benefits under this program shall not unreasonably refuse to
22 cooperate with any demand-side water conservation programs which are provided at no expense
23 to the household by any local agency or authority.