

**HOUSE . . . . . No.**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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PRESENTED BY:

***Dawne Shand and Bruce E. Tarr***

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*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.**

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PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Dawne Shand</i>	<i>1st Essex</i>	<i>1/7/2025</i>
<i>Bruce E. Tarr</i>	<i>First Essex and Middlesex</i>	<i>1/7/2025</i>

**HOUSE . . . . . No.**

[Pin Slip]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court  
(2025-2026)**

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

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

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

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

11 (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, 2025.

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, 2025.