

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

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

***Christopher M. Markey***

*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 Establishing a Coastal Waters Wastewater Financing Commission.**

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Christopher M. Markey</i>	<i>9th Bristol</i>	<i>1/13/2025</i>

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

[Pin Slip]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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

An Act Establishing a Coastal Waters Wastewater Financing Commission.

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

1 Notwithstanding any general or special laws to the contrary, there shall be established a  
2 special legislative commission to evaluate and identify specific revenue sources to fund essential  
3 wastewater infrastructure improvements in response to nitrogen pollution on the south coast of  
4 Massachusetts specifically in the towns of Acushnet, Carver, Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Lakeville,  
5 Gosnold, Marion, Mattapoisett, Middleborough, New Bedford, Plymouth, Rochester, Wareham,  
6 and Westport.

7 The special legislative commission shall consist of 27 members and include the house  
8 and senate chairs of the Joint Committee on Natural Resources and the Environment, who shall  
9 serve as co-chairs, the chair of the Senate Ways and Means Committee or a designee, chair of the  
10 House Ways and Means Committee or a designee; the secretary of energy and environmental  
11 affairs or a designee; the state treasurer or a designee; the secretary of administration and finance  
12 or a designee; the Executive Director of the Southeast Regional Planning and Economic  
13 Development District or a designee; the Executive Director of the One SouthCoast Chamber or a

14 designee; the President of the Buzzards Bay Coalition or a designee; 2 people to be appointed by  
15 the president of the senate; 2 people to be appointed by the speaker of the house of  
16 representatives; each of whom shall be from the south coast region; and 1 person to be  
17 appointed by the Select Board or Mayor of each of the 14 affected communities.

18 All appointees shall be made no later than 30 days following the effective date of this  
19 resolve. The co-chairs shall convene the first meeting of the special commission within 45 days  
20 of all appointments being made.

21 In the course of its deliberations, the commission shall make it a priority to examine the  
22 financial need of reducing nutrient pollution to the south coast's coastal waters including the  
23 costs to (i) expand sewer infrastructure to connect more septic systems to sewerage, (ii)  
24 expanding capacity and upgrading the level of treatment at existing wastewater treatment  
25 facilities (iii) constructing additional wastewater treatment facilities to address expanded service  
26 areas, (iv) reducing Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) discharges, and (v) upgrading septic  
27 systems to nitrogen reducing systems. Further, the commission shall examine (i) potential  
28 revenue sources, including but not limited to new fees or taxes for funding needed wastewater  
29 infrastructure improvements, (ii) the finances of cities and towns to make recommendations for  
30 improvements to financial policies and procedures.

31 The commission shall develop funding and financing recommendations to address  
32 wastewater infrastructure needs and to reduce nitrogen pollution on the south coast. The  
33 recommendations shall identify fair and equitable means of financing wastewater infrastructure  
34 improvements to address nitrogen pollution. The Commission shall have the authority to work  
35 with outside experts to conduct necessary reviews; provide guidance on potential action plans;

36 and provide economic analysis of financing sources. The experts shall be specialists in the fields  
37 of tax and revenue, nutrient pollution, water quality, wastewater infrastructure, and any other  
38 fields that may be useful to implement the Commission's tasks.

39 The commission shall hold public hearings to assist in the collection and evaluation of  
40 data and testimony. Experts may attend the public hearings to provide testimony and any other  
41 relevant information regarding the fulfilment of the commission's objectives.

42 The commission shall prepare a written report detailing identified funding sources and its  
43 recommendations, if any, together with drafts of legislation necessary to carry those  
44 recommendations into effect. The commission shall submit its initial report to the governor, the  
45 secretary of the executive office of energy and environmental affairs, the clerks of the senate and  
46 house of representatives, the chairs of the house and senate committees on ways and means and  
47 the joint committee on environment, natural resources and agriculture not later than 1 year after  
48 the effective date of this act.