SENATE DOCKET, NO. 1449 FILED ON: 1/16/2025

SENATE . . . . . No. 1625

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 relative to environmental public health.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
Bruce E. Tarr	*First Essex and Middlesex*
David Allen Robertson	*19th Middlesex*
Barry R. Finegold	*Second Essex and Middlesex*

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By Mr. Tarr, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 1625) of Bruce E. Tarr, David Allen Robertson and Barry R. Finegold for legislation relative to environmental public health. Public Health.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE, NO. *1469* OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act relative to environmental public health.

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

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 17 as appearing in the 2022 Edition is hereby amended by adding the following new section

Section 22: There shall be established and set up on the books of the commonwealth a fund to be known as the United Neighbor's Investing in the Truth for Youth Fund (UNITY Fund), which shall be administered by the Commissioner of the Department of Public Health. Expenditures from the fund shall not be subject to appropriation unless otherwise required by law. The fund shall provide funding for, but not supplant, funds previously designated to support public health investigations under Section 4 of Chapter 21e of the General Laws. The purpose of the fund shall be to provide initial and ongoing funding for cancer surveillance and environmental data collection and to ensure that studies initiated by the department to examine

11 the human health impact of past and present environmental conditions are completed in as timely
12 a manner as scientifically feasible. Funds may be provided from the UNITY Fund to support
13 environmental public health activities including but not limited to research, environmental and
14 biologic sample(s) design and collection modeling, surveys, public engagement and associated
15 administrative costs. The commissioner shall administer the fund using methods, policies,
16 procedures, standards, and criteria for the proper and efficient operation of the fund and studies
17 supported by it in a manner designed to achieve equity, fairness, and efficiency. The secretary of
18 administration and finance, in consultation with the secretary of health and human services, shall
19 determine annually the expenses of administering the fund, which shall be charged to the fund.
20 Any health surveillance and research efforts supported by the UNITY Fund shall be published
21 electronically on the General Court website as well as the department's website and filed with
22 the clerks of the House and Senate. The commissioner shall report annually itemized
23 expenditures from the fund to the clerks of the House and Senate and the Senate and House
24 committees on ways and means.

25 (b) The fund shall consist of: (i) legislative appropriations; (ii) gifts or grants from private
26 or public sources, (iii) any legislatively authorized transfers approved by the secretary of
27 administration and finance; and (iv) state and/or federal funds received as a result of cost
28 recovery efforts associated with health investigations related to state and nationally recognized
29 hazardous waste for the specific purpose of the fund. Any amounts contained in the fund shall
30 not revert to the general fund. All interest earned on the amounts in the fund shall be deposited or
31 retained in the fund. The Comptroller shall pay, without further appropriation, any and all
32 amounts certified by the Commissioner for payment as provided above.