

SENATE No. 2920

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

SENATE, January 29, 2026.

The committee on Financial Services to whom was referred the petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 2739) (subject to Joint Rule 12) of Michael O. Moore for legislation relative to firefighting water supplies and a state cistern program, report the accompanying bill (Senate, No. 2920).

For the committee,
Paul R. Feeney

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An Act relative to firefighting water supplies and a state cistern program.

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. (a) There shall be a task force established to conduct a comprehensive study
2 on the most effective and efficient means of implementing a cistern program across the
3 commonwealth. The task force shall study the costs, alternatives for developing water storage
4 cisterns for areas of the state with insufficient water supplies for fire suppression, prioritizing
5 cistern locations at the urban-wildland interface and in rural communities where water resources
6 for use by the fire service to combat fires are limited.

7 (b) The task force shall consist of 7 members that shall include: (i) the state fire marshal
8 or their designee, who shall serve as chair; (ii) the director of the Massachusetts emergency
9 management agency or their designee; (iii) the commissioner of the department of environmental
10 protection or their designee; (iv) 1 member of the Board of Building Standards and Regulations;
11 (v) the chief fire warden of the department of conservation and recreation; (vi) a representative
12 from the Fire Chiefs' Association of Massachusetts; (vii) 1 rural firefighter, (viii) additionally
13 there shall be 2 non voting advisory members, 1 appointed by the Speaker of the House of
14 Representatives and 1 appointed by the President of the Senate.

(c) The study shall include, but not be limited to: (i) input and recommendations from the appropriate municipal representatives from communities with documented water access challenges for fire suppression; (ii) evaluating the optimal placement of cisterns based on fire risk and water access; (iii) ensuring that any cistern deployment strategy is based on data-driven decision-making and informed by industry best practices, and codes and standards set for in NFPA 1141 and NFPA 1142; (vi) opportunities for cistern alternatives, including dry hydrants and related infrastructure; (vii) the cost for the construction, installation and maintenance of 10 water storage cisterns, dry hydrants and related water infrastructure per year, at the wildland urban interface and rural and urban communities throughout the commonwealth.

(d) The task force shall prepare a report on its activities and on any findings and recommendations for a statewide firefighting cistern strategy including, but not limited to: (i) identifying priority areas for installation; (ii) potential cost and funding sources; and (iii) regulatory or legislative changes needed to facilitate implementation. The report shall be submitted to the: (i) secretary of the executive office of public safety and security; (ii) joint committee on public safety and homeland security; and (iii) offices of the house and senate clerk not later than December 31, 2026.