

**Joint Committee on Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure
2025-2026 (194th) Bill Summary**

BILL NUMBER: H467

TITLE: An Act regularizing water rates for tenants

SPONSOR(S): Sousa, Priscila

HEARING DATE: July 14, 2025

REPORTING DEADLINE: September 12, 2025

CURRENT LAW

Section 22 of Chapter 186 of the Massachusetts General Laws regulates specific conditions under which landlords can charge tenants for water usage through submetering. Landlords must install state-approved submetering equipment for each dwelling unit and common area, ensuring all water is measured by both a primary and submeter. Landlords may only charge for water exclusively used by the dwelling unit, not for common areas, and must install functional water conservation devices before billing. All billing arrangements must be clearly disclosed in a written rental agreement, and bills must provide detailed usage and cost information, with specific due dates for payments. Landlords cannot charge additional fees beyond the calculated cost of water, and remain responsible for the water bill and maintaining the water supply system. Tenants have rights to dispute charges, request meter testing, and receive adjustments for leaks.

Under subsection (g) of said section 22, a landlord calculates the per-unit water cost by dividing the total water bill (excluding penalties) by the building's total water consumption. The charge to each submetered unit cannot exceed this calculated per-unit cost multiplied by the unit's consumption, ensuring the total submetered usage does not surpass the building's overall water company bill.

SUMMARY

This legislation seeks to ensure that tenants are only responsible for the municipal water rate applied to their particular unit's usage, and that landlords are responsible for any costs associated with an increased municipal rate incurred by the total water used by the entire premises combined.