

Massachusetts House of Representatives Bill Summary

Bill #: H.2330

Title: An Act relative to equitable representation

Sponsor: Rep. Aaron Saunders

Committee: Municipalities and Regional Government

Hearing Date: July 22, 2025

Current Law: MGL Chapter 40N governs the establishment of water and sewer commissions in cities and towns that accept the provisions of this law. The law contains procedures for creating the commission and choosing members, selecting an executive director and employees, powers and duties, limitations, power to borrow and repay money, etc. Such commissions are independent public instrumentalities; subdivisions of the Commonwealth.

Such commissions are managed by a 3-member board of directors, residents who are appointed by the local appointing authority according to the municipal charter.

Summary: The bill appears to modify the organization and structure of the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission, which was established pursuant to Chapter 40N of the General Laws. The legislation:

- Expands and diversifies the membership of the board of directors;
- Describes the powers and duties of the board, filling vacancies, when and how members may be removed, and that they serve without compensation;
- States that the commission shall be deemed to be a governmental body and agency subject to applicable statutes, a public body whose monies are to be considered public funds for purposes of state law;
- Establishes an advisory board to the commission consisting of representatives from Ludlow, Springfield, Wilbraham, East Longmeadow, Longmeadow, Agawam and West Springfield, plus 2 other persons representing the interests of the Little River watershed area comprising the towns of Russell, Granville and Blandford;
- The total voting strength of the advisory board would be 100 votes, divided among the members in proportion to the amount that the community pays for water and sewer service on an annual basis. The voting strength would be certified by the executive office of (energy and) environmental affairs based upon the annual records of the metropolitan district commission (now Department of Conservation and Recreation). This section of the bill contains some outdated language which refers to a process ending on July 1, 1986.
- The advisory board shall adopt by-laws for the conduct of its business, and those may be revised or amended as needed. It shall annually elect officers,

which may be removed. Each member serves without compensation, but may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of the board's duties, as approved by the advisory board, not to exceed a total of \$100,000 annually. Members could serve for two consecutive terms.

- The advisory board's duties are listed in the bill.

The water and sewer commission would have until December 31, 2026 to update any by-law or other document to conform with this act.