

Massachusetts House of Representatives

Bill Summary

Bill #:	H.5611
Title:	An Act relative to the water and sewer commission of the town of Hopedale
Sponsor:	Rep. Brian Murray and Sen. Ryan Fattman
Committee:	Municipalities and Regional Government
Hearing Date:	9/21/26 to 9/28/26 written testimony only
Current Law:	Mass. General Laws Chapter 41, Section 1 provides for the election of one or more sewer commissioners. Section 69A of Chapter 41 authorizes towns having a water supply or distribution system to elect a three-member board of water commissioners to serve three-year, staggered terms of office. Section 69B lists the powers and duties of water commissioners. The Hopedale Water and Sewer Commission is comprised of three elected water and sewer commissioners. The water and sewer department also employs a manager, administrative assistant, and approximately 9 other employees. The water and sewer commissions were combined into a single elected board by vote of the town in 1983.
Summary:	This special legislation would authorize the Water and Sewer Commission, notwithstanding any contrary general or special laws, to appoint all employees of the water and sewer department. They would also be empowered to employ, supervise, discipline and remove such employees.
Notes:	The home rule petition language was approved as Article 22 at the May 19, 2026 Annual Town Meeting; motion passed with 91 voters present. According to the sponsor and town, the organization with that clear chain of command ensures a consistent focus and priorities on the protection and preservation of the water supply and the WS operations.