

Annual Report on Timely Action, Fees, and Program Improvements

State Fiscal Year 2025



February 6, 2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Maura Healey, Governor

Kim Driscoll, Lieutenant Governor

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Rebecca Tepper, Secretary

Department of Environmental Protection

Bonnie Heiple, Commissioner

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), an agency within the Executive Office of Energy

and Environmental Affairs (EEA), is charged with protecting and enhancing the Commonwealth's natural resources - air, water, and land - to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of all people, and a clean and safe environment for future generations. In carrying out this mission, MassDEP commits to address and advance environmental justice and equity for all people of the Commonwealth; provide meaningful, inclusive opportunities for people to participate in agency decisions that affect their lives; and ensure a diverse workforce that reflects the communities we serve.

MassDEP's permitting and annual compliance fee program was established in 1990 with the passage of M.G.L. c.21A Section 18 (the Fees Statute) and the promulgation of 310 CMR 4.00, the Department's Timely Action Schedule and Fee Provisions (the Fees Regulations). In return for the payment of fees to support its environmental programs, MassDEP sets specific schedules for permit review supported by a money-back guarantee if MassDEP fails to meet those schedules. The purpose of the Fees Statute and Regulations is to provide for the orderly and efficient administration of MassDEP's permitting and compliance programs.

The Legislature has directed MassDEP to report annually on its permitting and compliance performance and to provide a summary of the significant improvements the Department has made in these areas. This report is provided in response to that requirement.

Please visit our website at
www.mass.gov/DEP for more information
about these accomplishments and
MassDEP's environmental programs.

I. INTRODUCTION

Commissioner Bonnie Heiple has led the agency through a challenging year of changing economic conditions, shifting availability and requirements for federal grant funds, new scientific publications related to emerging contaminants, and new legislation that proposes permitting improvements and streamlining. The agency has also made progress in adapting and improving the agency's information services and adjusting the

MassDEP's Mission

MassDEP's mission is to protect and enhance the Commonwealth's natural resources - air, water, and land - to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of all people, and a clean and safe environment for future generations.

In carrying out this mission MassDEP commits to address and advance environmental justice and equity for all people of the Commonwealth; provide meaningful, inclusive opportunities for people to participate in agency decisions that affect their lives; and ensure a diverse workforce that reflects the communities we serve.

MassDEP workforce as the agency continues to experience retirements and staffing challenges.

Particular accomplishments during state fiscal year 2025 (SFY25) include:

- ❖ Responding to changes in federal funding
- ❖ Assessing and adapting to climate change
- ❖ Streamlining environmental permitting
- ❖ Increasing transparency using technology
- ❖ Supporting environmental justice
- ❖ Addressing PFAS contamination
- ❖ Diverting food waste and support for increased recycling
- ❖ Planning for nitrogen reductions through watershed permitting on Cape Cod
- ❖ Considering cumulative environmental impacts in permitting
- ❖ Implementing legislative directives

MassDEP's environmental permit application fees totaled \$17.9 million in SFY25. That total includes \$10 million collected in Annual Compliance Fees, \$3.9 million in Chapter 21E Annual Compliance Fees and \$1.7 million in Wetlands Notices of Intent Fees. MassDEP's appropriation in SFY25 from the General Fund was \$87,404,028.

MassDEP's permitting fees and timelines have not been adjusted through its regulations at 310 CMR 4.00 since 2020. Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 21A, § 18(j), the Department shall regularly review all fees and schedules established pursuant to 310 CMR 4.00 and shall by regulation adjust fees and schedules as necessary to reflect changes in regulatory requirements, technologies, the nature and cost of the Department's permitting and compliance activities, and improvements in the Department's practices and procedures.

Environmental enforcement activities in SFY25 included 5,719 Compliance Inspections, 2,215 Lower-Level Enforcement actions and 451 Higher Level Enforcement actions. Penalties assessed this year totaled \$2.3 million and the agency collected \$1.7 million in penalty payments. Additional details on revenue from permit fees and MassDEP's compliance and enforcement activities are included in section III of this report.

II. HIGHLIGHTS OF MASSDEP ACCOMPLISHMENTS: SFY25

1. Responding to Changes in Federal Funding

MassDEP is closely monitoring any changes to federal funding streams that could impact agency staffing or grant programs. The agency relies on \$8 million in federal dollars that are dedicated to funding 140 staff positions (fully or partially funded) needed to meet federal obligations. Thirty million dollars in federal funding is dedicated to grant programs (not including the State Revolving Fund). MassDEP is managing federal funding uncertainty at this time. The state is unable to make up for all funding losses but plans to manage the situation with resources available should federal funding become unavailable.

MassDEP receives federal funding for the following grant accounts:

- Superfund/Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act/Brownfields
- Long Island Sound Grant Program (nitrogen watershed impacts)
- Emerging Contaminants Grants

- Clean Air - Enhance Protection of Environmental Justice (EJ) Populations (Cumulative Impact Analysis Grant and Disadvantaged Communities Air Monitoring Grant)
- RecycleSmart MA
- Clean Air Act Air Sensor Program
- Clean Diesel Grants
- Diesel Emissions Reduction Act Grant
- Small, Underserved, and Disadvantaged Community Grants
- School and Child Care Lead Testing and Reduction Grants
- Clean Water Act s.604(b) Water Quality Management Planning Grant
- Clean Water Act s.319 Nonpoint Source Implementation Grant
- Clean Water Act s.106 Water Pollution Control Grant

2. Assessing and Adapting to Climate Change

Throughout SFY25, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) and MassDEP advanced work to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and developed local resiliency measures to adapt to changed precipitation patterns, more frequent severe weather events, and prevent damage to the natural and built environment. MassDEP is committed to respond with urgency to this transformative environmental and public health challenge. The agency is guided by the Clean Energy and Climate Plans (CECPs) for 2025, 2030 and 2050. All plans are available online. The CECP for 2025 and 2030 is available online at <https://www.mass.gov/doc/clean-energy-and-climate-plan-for-2025-and-2030/download>. The CECP for 2050 is available online at <https://www.mass.gov/doc/2050-clean-energy-and-climate-plan/download>.

Working Towards a Clean Heat Standard

The Clean Energy and Climate Plan calls for MassDEP to develop a Clean Heat Standard to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the heating sector. MassDEP participated in EOEEA's Clean Heat Commission to contribute to the design of such a program. The Commission released its final report in 2022, available here: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/massachusetts-commission-on-clean-heat-final-report-november-30-2022/download>. Since then, a draft framework for a Clean Heat Standard was published by MassDEP in fall 2023 that built on the agency's stakeholder process to solicit input on the program design. Reporting regulations for greenhouse gas emissions from heating fuels were promulgated in November of 2024 and will support the eventual development of a Clean Heat Standard.

A number of state agencies, including MassDEP, are working to ensure there is a robust market for affordable clean heat in Massachusetts, despite changing federal tax incentives. To allow sufficient time for those initiatives to take effect, and to inform development of a Clean Heat Standard tailored to the needs of Massachusetts residents, MassDEP now plans to phase-in this standard no earlier than 2028. As announced in December 2025, the following steps will ensure ongoing progress:

Evaluate New Fuel and Emissions Data – Fuel and emissions data reported under MassDEP’s new reporting requirements and under the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources’ new Large Building Energy Reporting program will provide new information that can inform refinements to the CHS program design.

- **Analyze Affordability Trends** – Since the publication of the CHS Draft Framework, Massachusetts is offering new reduced electricity rates for heat pumps and there have been major changes to relevant federal tax incentives.
- **Monitor Heat Pump Adoption** – The CHS Draft Framework included building electrification in line with Mass Save in the early years of program implementation. MassDEP will monitor heat pump adoption rates with the goal of implementing a CHS that creates a market to spur further progress.
- **Collect Additional Information** – MassDEP will assess additional steps to support refinements to the CHS Draft Framework, including gathering more information about heating fuels.

More information on the Clean Heat Standard Program development can be found here:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/clean-heat-standard-program-development>.

Expanding Air Quality Monitoring Sensors and Data

MassDEP expanded air quality monitoring and community-based air sensor efforts across the Commonwealth, with a particular focus on areas that have historically experienced worse air quality. The agency added four ultrafine particle (UFP) monitors at its monitoring stations in Boston (Von Hillern Street), Chelmsford, Boston-Chinatown, and Springfield to enhance particle pollution monitoring in or near urban population areas near high traffic roadways. MassDEP awarded 213 fine particulate matter (PM2.5) air quality sensors to 27 municipalities and community-based organizations. The new sensors, which are funded by the Massachusetts Office of Environmental Justice and Equity, will be deployed across the state with a majority installed in Environmental Justice areas. The newest monitoring stations, with PM2.5 and black carbon monitor capability, are located in Saugus and Framingham and became operational this year.

Additional Work to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Increase Resiliency

- A. **SUPPORT FOR ELECTRIC VEHICLES AND CHARGING STATIONS.** MassDEP administers a grant program to increase access to electric vehicles called the Massachusetts Electric Vehicle Incentive Program (MassEVIP). This program has been funded primarily through the Volkswagen emissions settlement. MassDEP allocated the maximum allowable amount (15%) of the Volkswagen funds to light-duty electric vehicle charging equipment. In SFY25 the agency distributed \$1,137,071 from the settlement fund to support EVs and charging stations.
- B. **RESILIENTMASS PLAN.** MassDEP continued to advance initiatives directed by EOEEA and Executive Office of Public Safety and Security as part of the ResilientMass Plan. The Plan, released in the fall 2023, includes important resiliency initiatives led by MassDEP, including developing a statewide hydraulic tool for designing stream crossings, providing municipal technical GIS mapping assistance for water utilities, developing a clean heat standard for heating fuels, and updating wetlands erosion control and restoration guidance. See the action tracker for these projects here: [ResilientMass Action Tracker](#).
- C. **NO NET LOSS OF CARBON.** As a commitment under the CECPs, EOEEA and MassDEP conducted the No Net Loss of Carbon in Wetlands Project to evaluate the carbon sequestration function of wetlands and develop strategies to achieve the CECP goal of No Net Loss of Carbon in Wetlands in Massachusetts. MassDEP is evaluating the draft report's findings and finalizing the report which will recommend policy and regulatory strategies for improved protection of wetlands and mitigation for wetland carbon impacts.
- D. **GAP ENERGY GRANTS.** MassDEP's Clean Energy Results Program continued to oversee deployment of \$8.1 million provided through 60 Gap Energy Grants to wastewater and drinking water systems, nonprofit organizations and small businesses providing affordable multifamily housing, and food distribution or production facilities. The grants help "fill the financial gap" to enable energy efficiency and clean energy generation projects to move forward. The grants improve emergency response capacity, resilience in extreme weather, and energy and greenhouse gas emissions reductions. Forty-one of the 60 projects have now been completed and are operational.

E. GUIDANCE FOR RESILIENT WETLANDS RESTORATION. MassDEP convened interagency and stakeholder work groups to evaluate salt marsh restoration approaches and to clarify permitting processes under the Wetlands Protection Act and related permit requirements (e.g., 401, Chapter 91). With input from those partners, MassDEP developed final guidance to ensure consistency in permitting and to streamline the review process for projects involving runnels, ditch remediation, and marsh habitat mounds.

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/guidance-for-salt-marsh-restoration-techniques-including-ditch-remediation-runnels-and-marsh-habitat-mounds/download>

Draft guidance on salt marsh restoration using sediment augmentation methods (i.e., Thin-Layer-Placement and Passive Sediment Augmentation) was issued in December 2024. <https://www.mass.gov/doc/final-guidance-for-management-and-beneficial-reuse-of-dredged-and-fill-material-for-salt-marsh-restoration-thin-layer-placement-tlp/download>.

MassDEP is preparing proposed revisions to its wetlands regulations that will advance resiliency in coastal floodplains, update stormwater precipitation factors for projects in resource areas. Draft regulations are also being prepared to facilitate wetlands restoration projects, such as control of invasive species, and promote restoration of retired or abandoned cranberry bogs.

F. STATEWIDE HYDRAULIC MODEL FOR CLIMATE RESILIENT STREAM CROSSINGS. Many of the 25,000-plus roadway crossing structures such as small bridges and culverts that allow rivers and streams to pass under roads in Massachusetts are undersized. This results in substantial impacts on fish and wildlife movement and habitat. Undersized structures also lack the capacity to withstand floods, especially given the increasing intensity and frequency of flooding. In a multi- year collaborative project with U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), MassDEP is developing a Statewide Hydraulic Model that will assist municipalities and other owners of crossing structures by facilitating permitting and design of stream crossings that are resilient for flood flows and that better meet wetlands stream crossing standards for aquatic organism passage. By the end of 2025, MassDEP expects that USGS will make available the model in several watersheds in Western MA, to help proponents with preliminary designs.

This multi-year project is one of the ResilientMass Plan action projects that MassDEP is leading.

3. Equity and Environmental Justice

Environmental Justice is at the heart of our mission and is an agency priority. Staff in MassDEP's regional offices and Boston work very closely with the EOEEA Office of Environmental Justice & Equity to help implement the Climate Roadmap Law and integrate EJ and equity considerations into key agency actions. MassDEP's EJ Director and staff are focused on outreach and engagement and continue to spread the word about MassDEP's activities in community meetings, email and by interacting/engaging with Community Based Organizations, community leaders, participating regularly with the Massachusetts Legislative EJ Round Table and other groups.

4. 4. Addressing PFAS

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a family of compounds, in use since the 1950s, made up of chains of carbon atoms bonded to fluorine. The carbon-fluorine bond is extremely stable which makes these compounds heat and stain resistant and water repellent. They are often called "forever chemicals" as they do not biodegrade over time and are slowly excreted from the body, typically counted in years.

PFAS and Public Water Systems

The vast majority of Massachusetts residents are consuming water that currently meets the Massachusetts Maximum Contaminant Level for 6 PFAS compounds in the state drinking water standards (PFAS6) which were adopted in 2020. Since then, our understanding of PFAS has evolved with new health assessments and actions by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) and others.

The regulatory landscape is changing at the federal level. US EPA adopted PFAS drinking water standards, and with MassDEP's authority under the Safe Drinking Water Act, MassDEP must adopt state PFAS drinking water regulations that are at least as stringent as those new federal standards. States must adopt the new federal drinking water standards by April 2029, and all public water suppliers will need to comply with the new standards by April 2031. Recently the US EPA signaled in 2025 that it will rescind 4 of its PFAS standards, keeping the standards for 2 compounds (PFOS and PFOA). US EPA has encouraged states to seek extensions of the timeline to adopt the federal standards, which MassDEP plans to request such an extension.

MassDEP began working with public water suppliers that may exceed the new standards back in 2023 and anticipates that approximately 163 public water systems will exceed the new federal standard for PFOS and/or PFOA. The state has provided almost \$800 million for communities and water systems to assess and address PFAS contamination through grants and the State Revolving Fund.

PFAS at Contaminated Sites

MassDEP's Waste Site Cleanup (BWSC) Program has worked to identify sites with reportable PFAS contamination, and assess and remediate those sites under its privatized program. To date, MassDEP/BWSC has identified 176 sites contaminated with PFAS, 53 of which are impacting public water supplies, private water supplies or both. Upon discovery, the Waste Site Cleanup Program conducts site investigation work to identify parties responsible for PFAS contaminated sites and ensures that such parties assume responsibility and costs for necessary assessment and remedial actions to address the PFAS contamination.

Where PFAS contamination levels in drinking water at a site is found at levels considered to be an Imminent Hazard, currently 90 parts per trillion or greater of PFAS6, BWSC and its contractors provide bottled water, sample the water, and install and maintain point of entry treatment systems to mitigate exposures and provide general oversight of ongoing mitigation measures. The program is currently operating 50 point of entry treatment systems and supplying bottled water to 41 homes. MassDEP has spent approximately \$1 million over the past six years on PFAS Imminent Hazard mitigation. The average cost per home is approximately \$10,000 (including bottled water, treatment installation, operation and maintenance and contractor oversight).

PFAS in Wastewater and Residuals Sampling: permit requirements and results. MassDEP's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)/Surface Water Discharge Program began including requirements for surface water dischargers to test for PFAS in permits issued after 2021. The Residuals database was expanded to allow surface water discharge permit holders to report PFAS results, and that data became available on the public portal. As of 2025, over 1000 data sets were submitted to the Residuals and surface water discharge PFAS Databases, which are included on the public portal.

Studying PFAS prevalence in Massachusetts. Since 2020 MassDEP has conducted multiple studies with the USGS and others to sample upgradient, downgradient and influent, effluent and residuals at publicly owned treatment works (POTWs). The first such study was conducted between the MassDEP Watershed Planning Program (WPP) and USGS in 2020 and included evaluation of PFAS in several MA rivers located near wastewater

treatment plants. Details about this study are available at the bottom of this following website: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/pfas-in-surface-water-and-fish-tissue>

Also, since 2022, MassDEP has worked with USGS to continue testing for PFAS in and around wastewater treatment plants. These include the following studies:

(<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/pfas-in-wastewater-facilities-with-npdes-permits#massdep-projects>)

- “PFAS sampling in rivers and streams, influent, effluent and residuals at and near selected wastewater treatment facilities (WWTF) in Massachusetts”;
- “PFAS sampling in rivers, influent, effluent, residuals, and collection systems at and near selected wastewater treatment facilities (WWTF) in Massachusetts”; and
- “Comparison of 24-hr Composite and Grab samples for characterizing PFAS in Effluent of Wastewater Treatment Facilities (title draft).”

Sludge disposal capacity, reduction and destruction technologies. In 2024 MassDEP awarded two contracts to analyze sludge disposal and reuse capacity in and outside of the Commonwealth. These contracts are collectively referred to as the PFAS and Residuals Technology and Management Study (“Sludge and Septage Study”). Part 1 (<https://www.mass.gov/doc/request-for-quotes-pfas-and-residuals-technology-and-management-study-part-1/download>) focuses on the current and near-term destinations for Massachusetts sludge and septage and was conducted between February and June 2024. Part 2 (<https://www.mass.gov/doc/request-for-quotes-pfas-and-residuals-technology-and-management-study-part-2/download>) focuses on the intersection of sludge and PFAS, including how legislative and policy decisions regulating PFAS may affect sludge disposal capacity, and PFAS reduction and destruction technologies. The Part 2 contract was awarded in 2024 was published in December 2025:

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/pfas-and-residuals-technology-and-management-study-part-2/download>. It includes an overview of PFAS reduction and management technologies for wastewater and sludge, contributions of PFAS into sewer systems and then to POTWs (Indirect Discharges), PFAS impacts on sludge disposal methods as well as options for POTWs and regulators to consider. MassDEP’s consultants Tighe & Bond and Brown and Caldwell presented a summary of both Parts 1 and 2 on January 31, 2025 and the presentation and materials are available at the following website: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/residuals-biosolids>.

Testing at all wastewater facilities in Massachusetts. In 2025 MassDEP awarded a contract to better understand PFAS concentrations in influent, effluent, and sludge at municipal wastewater treatment plants: “The PFAS Testing Study at Massachusetts POTWs.” The study sampled all 114 Massachusetts municipal wastewater treatment plants in the surface water discharge program. It is the first comprehensive study of wastewater PFAS across Massachusetts. The Final PFAS Testing Study for NPDES Publicly Owned Treatment works was published in November 2025 and is available on MassDEP’s website: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/massdep-pfas-testing-study-for-npdes-potws/download>.

5. Diverting Food Waste and Increasing Recycling

Massachusetts is a national leader on diverting food waste out of our landfills and MassDEP is executing many solid waste and recycling programs and strategies to implement the goals of the 2030 Solid Waste Master Plan with an ultimate target of 90% waste reduction by 2050. Funding from the past few budget cycles provided additional staff which will enhance the agency’s capacity to enforce landfill waste bans, such as bans on disposal of textiles and mattresses, and other key solid waste initiatives. The agency has achieved positive results with extensive composting networks, by conducting frequent inspections, keeping the rules simple and levying fines on businesses that do not comply.

Recent grant funding for waste reduction programs have provided:

- \$4 million in Sustainable Materials Recovery Program Municipal Grants to 285 municipalities and regional groups in the most recent awards round. These grants to municipalities support local recycling, composting/organics, reuse, source reduction, and programs and activities that increase diversion and reduce disposal.
- \$1.8 million to 21 organizations this fall through the Recycling and Reuse Business Development grant.
- \$140,000 to 23 organizations through our Reuse Micro Grants.

In 2025 MassDEP also launched a new Waste Reduction Innovations Grant program in the Spring 2025, providing funding for innovative business and technology development as well as increased capital grants to spur investment in our recycling infrastructure.

<https://www.mass.gov/how-to/waste-reduction-innovation-grant>.

Other solid waste and recycling resources provided by MassDEP include **RecycleSmart MA**, an initiative sponsored by MassDEP to improve the quality of recycling programs throughout the state. RecycleSmart serves as a hub of information that helps to demystify

the recycling process and provides resources for residents and communities on what should and shouldn't go into the recycling bin.

6. Advancing Watershed Permitting on Cape Cod

The Healey-Driscoll Administration is committed to continue working side-by-side with Cape communities and their elected officials to provide financial support and identify opportunities for additional assistance for communities and homeowners to comply with watershed permitting and nitrogen reduction regulations. Cape Cod municipalities and residents must take steps to mitigate nitrogen pollution from wastewater, namely from septic systems. The options for compliance with these regulations are town-wide Watershed Permits to outline steps that the community will take to reduce nitrogen reduction and for homeowners to install nitrogen reduction technology on their septic systems. Town-wide nitrogen reduction solutions may include plans to bring home septic systems into compliance, establishment of a public sewer system, or combinations of these solutions that best fits the needs of the community.

Currently, the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust provides 0% financing for eligible nutrient reduction projects, as well as loan forgiveness to disadvantaged communities. The Trust has also recently utilized American Rescue Plan Act funds to provide additional financing support. The SFY25 budget clarified that upgrades to septic systems or connections to sewer required by MassDEP's Title 5/Watershed Permitting regulations are eligible for the Title 5 septic tax credit (\$18,000). All Cape communities have now submitted notification of their intention to pursue a watershed permit. The Nitrogen Resource Nitrogen Sensitive Areas (NRNSA) Grants totaled \$600,000 in SFY24, \$825,000 in SFY25. MassDEP is currently offering \$830,000 through this grant program for SFY26.

7. Recent Legislative Directives

A. Extended Producer Responsibility Commission.

The 2024 climate bill directed MassDEP to chair a commission to recommend extended producer responsibility (EPR) policies for Massachusetts. EPR is a policy approach that assigns producers responsibility for the end-of-life management of their products. Policy recommendations are due to the legislature by January 2026. MassDEP convened the commission on a regular basis throughout 2025. The meetings are open to the public and

have covered cover areas such as paint, mattresses, lithium-ion batteries, and packaging. MassDEP has also invited industry experts, including non-profits and advocacy organizations, to provide information on EPR for categories under their purview. A final copy of the Commission's recommendations will be posted to MassDEP's website: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/extended-producer-responsibility-commission>.

B. Guidance on Battery Storage and Electric Vehicle Chargers.

The 2024 climate bill directed MassDEP, the Department of Energy Resources, and the Board of Fire Prevention and Regulations to issue guidance on the public health, safety and environment impacts of electric battery storage and Electric Vehicle by August 2025. The guidance document was published after soliciting public comment during its development. It can be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/guidance-on-electric-battery-storage-and-electric-vehicle-chargersaugust-2025/download>

C. Composting Grants for Small Businesses, Farms and Food Services.

In the FY24 budget, MassDEP was given \$150,000 to provide composting grants for small businesses with a focus on agricultural and food service businesses. The funding was used to provide assistance to farms and other businesses through RecyclingWorks in Massachusetts – a recycling assistance program funded by MassDEP that helps businesses and institutions reduce waste and maximize recycling, reuse, and food recovery opportunities. MassDEP staff attended forums, expos, chamber of commerce meetings, and other similar events to connect directly with food service businesses, schools, municipalities, and other entities directly on food waste reduction and composting. Staff also contacted past RecyclingWorks customers to assess their needs for additional technical support needed to expand their composting programs.

III. By the Numbers: MassDEP Permitting, Compliance and Enforcement in SFY25

MassDEP's permitting and related compliance and enforcement activities in SFY25 are summarized in the following tables. Permitting, compliance, and enforcement action counts and dollar amounts reported below may vary from figures previously reported for SFY24 due to post-report data reconciliation.

Table A. Timely Action Permit Application Fees and Activity*

Parameter	SFY2024	SFY2025
Applications received	2925	2943
Final determinations issued**	2657	2981
Refunds for missed timelines	0	0
Dollar value of timeline refunds	\$0	\$0

* Values reported include permit categories tracked in MassDEP's Accela on-line permitting application submittal system and do not include certain categories such as Asbestos/demolition notifications, etc., which are tracked separately.

** Final determinations reported include only applications that were approved, denied, or withdrawn during the fiscal year and may not reconcile with the total number of applications received because some reviews begin in one fiscal year and conclude in the next.

Table B. Timely Action Permit Application Final Determinations*

MassDEP Program	Final Determinations Issued***	Approved	Denied	Withdrawn
Air Quality	101	89	0	12
Waste Site Cleanup	0	0	0	0

Hazardous Waste	80	78	0	2
Lab Certifications	148	144	1	3
Solid Waste	336	307	1	28
Watershed Management	574	560	0	14
Water Pollution Control	171	144	0	27
Water Supply	668	622	18	28
Wetlands & Waterways	903	842	1	60
Total – All Programs	2981	2786	21	174

* Values reported include permit categories tracked in MassDEP's Accela on-line permitting application submittal system and do not include certain categories such as Asbestos/demolition notifications, etc., which are tracked separately.

Table C. Timely Action Fees Collected Under 310 CMR 4.00

Fee Type	SFY2024	SFY2025
Annual Compliance Fees	\$10.2 million	\$10 million
Chapter 21E Annual Compliance Fees	\$4.0 million	\$3.9 million
All Permit Application Fees	\$2.6 million	\$2.3 million
Wetlands Notices of Intent	\$1.8 million	\$1.7 million
Total Timely Action Fees Collected	\$18.5 million	\$17.9 million

Table D. Special Projects Permitting and Oversight Fund

For certain projects that need specialized attention or action due to project size, complexity, or technical difficulty, or where proposed projects serve significant public interests and offer opportunities to restore, protect, conserve, or enhance natural resources, an alternative timeline and fee structure may be advisable. Pursuant to MGL c.

21A, section 18 (d) and Section 40 of Chapter 149 of the Acts of 2004, revenue derived from these projects is deposited into the Special Projects Permitting and Oversight Fund. During Fiscal Year 2025, the following active projects met these criteria with associated expenses:

Project Name	Special Project Number	Total FY25 Costs Incurred	Total Project Costs Incurred	Receipts to Date 08-14-25	Permit Code(s)
New Bedford Harbor Dredging	TF07	\$7,431	\$95,960	\$95,960	NA
Clean Energy Results Program	TF52	\$140,297	\$16,210,406	\$17,017,282	NA
Drinking Water & Wastewater	TF52	\$150,000	\$4,005,512	\$4,000,000	NA
Tradebe Treatment & Recycling	TF117	\$9,309	\$27,343	\$40,163	HW08
Triumvirate Environmental (Merrimack) HW LIC Renew	TF119	\$10,851	\$10,851	\$7,735	HW08
Clean Harbors Braintree	TF120	\$17,836	\$17,836	\$17,836	HW08
TOTAL		\$335,724	\$20,367,908	\$20,178,976	

NA = Not Applicable. Information is not available at this time.

Table E. Compliance and Enforcement Activity

Activity	SFY2024	SFY2025
Compliance Inspections	5422	5719
Lower Level Enforcement	2006	2215
Higher Level Enforcement***	508	451
MassDEP Penalties Assessed	\$1.7 million	\$2.3 million
MassDEP Penalties Collected	\$1.1 million	\$1.7 million

*** This value includes all Higher Level Enforcement actions with Referrals and Settlements involving the Attorney General's office, US EPA, District Attorneys, and the Licensed Site Professional Board.

IV. Accomplishments and Goals for Compliance and Enforcement Activities

Compliance and enforcement activities were stable or increased in number over the course of SFY25. As detailed in the above charts, the following highlights of SFY25 accomplishments are compared to the previous year's activities. All permitting and enforcement measures increased in SFY25 with the exception of the total number of Higher Level Enforcement actions issued and the total amount of permitting fees received.

- The number of compliance inspections increased (+297)
- The number of Higher-Level Enforcement actions decreased (-57)
- The number of Lower-Level Enforcement actions increased (+207)
- The total amount of penalties (dollars) assessed increased (+\$600,000).
- The total amount of penalties (dollars) collected increased (+\$500,000)
- Permit applications submitted increased (+18)
- Permits issued increased (+324)
- No permit fee refunds were issued for not meeting permitting timelines (no change).
- The total amount of permitting fees received decreased (-\$600,000).

The agency will strive to maintain a vigorous compliance and enforcement presence in SFY26, including technical compliance assistance, regular inspection protocols and coverage, and appropriate enforcement actions when necessary.

V. Summary of the Significant Improvements in Permitting and Compliance Programs

Permit Streamlining

MassDEP and EOEEA, as well as EOEEA permitting agencies, are working with a variety of stakeholders to discuss easier pathways to permit projects, including but not limited to nature-based solutions, wetland restoration projects, and housing and economic development. MassDEP recently hired a Climate Strategy Director to assist in meeting climate and housing goals. MassDEP regularly evaluates its regulations and processes to make sure they are both protective of the environment and provide timely and fair review. This year MassDEP met with a broad stakeholder group to discuss how our regulations

intersect with development, particularly the development of housing and economic development projects. MassDEP convened roundtables to hear from the development community to understand challenges they might be facing, identify areas that can use enhanced communication and training, and to work together to identify best practices or changes, without sacrificing environmental protection, which is our mission.

Increasing Transparency with Technology

MassDEP's information technology system is part of EOEEA's enterprise-wide framework for information management. The agency vision includes the Energy and Environmental Information and Public Access System (EIPAS), a multi-year integrated, shared service platform intended to modernize existing systems and to add new functionality based on MassDEP's evolving data needs. Modernized applications enable MassDEP to improve transparency and better serve the public through shared data and online tools. The agency continues to build upon its successes, having added the citizen data portal and providing a secretariat-wide and agency-wide paperless online permitting platform. MassDEP is continuing to add functionality to its systems and improving data access with the public and regulated community.

Cumulative Impact Analysis in Permitting

In 2021, *An Act creating a next generation roadmap for Massachusetts climate policy* (Chapter 8 of the Acts of 2021) was signed into law. It established requirements for emissions reductions from a 1990 baseline: reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030, 75% by 2040 and achieving net-zero status by 2050. The Act also directed MassDEP to evaluate and seek public comment on incorporating cumulative impact analyses into air permitting. It further directed MassDEP to propose regulations to include cumulative impact analyses for certain air quality permits. The agency conducted an extensive stakeholder process to guide this work and published final rules that establish a cumulative impact analysis approach for certain air permits. The supporting tools for permit applicants provide localized demographic and environmental burden information and the regulations require advance engagement with affected communities. The innovative permitting steps will ensure deliberate consideration of local input and the historic impact of existing environmental burdens near proposed air permits. More information is available here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/cumulative-impact-analysis-in-air-quality-permitting>

Online Permitting

MassDEP's online permitting system (Accela) is available for nearly all agency permits, enabling online application submittals. A few permits still are managed with outdated technological systems which MassDEP is planning to replace, pending funding availability.

Online permit application and processing provides multiple benefits:

- The online system checks to ensure minimum requirements are met, to facilitate administrative completeness of submittals and timely issuance.
- Permit fees can be paid online, resulting in immediate start of the permit timelines upon submission.
- “Online portals” enable the applicant and regulated entities to view the permit application [Search EEA Projects \(mass.gov\)](#) and search all permit decisions online. [EEA Data Portal \(state.ma.us\)](#).
- MassDEP's webpage provides guidance on MassDEP permitting, including a [MassDEP Guide for Online Permitting \(MassDEP Guide for Online Permitting | Mass.gov\)](#) which includes information regarding the agency’s “money back” guarantee. MassDEP offers this guarantee: A timely decision or you are eligible for a refund. The agency has established permit category-specific timelines for acting on the applications it receives for permits, licenses, plan approvals, registrations, determinations and other approvals in 310 CMR 4.00.