

Boston Groundwater Trust

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Boston Water & Sewer Commission
980 Harrison Avenue
Boston, MA 02119

Subject: Boston Water & Sewer Commission 2022-2024 Capital Improvement Program Testimony

Good evening. My name is Christian Simonelli, and I am the Executive Director of the Boston Groundwater Trust (BGWT). The Trust was established by the Boston City Council in 1986 to monitor groundwater levels in sections of the City where the integrity of wood pile supported building foundations are threatened by low groundwater. Wood piles will last indefinitely if they remain submerged by groundwater. If groundwater levels drop, the pilings can begin to decay, eventually leading to expensive foundation repairs (not covered by insurance) or, in the worst case, the total loss of the building.

After a period of dormant activity, the Trust was re-activated in 1997. Since that time our organization has made enormous progress including the installation of an 800+ observation well network to monitor groundwater levels. Most importantly the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District (GCOD), in Article 32 of the zoning code was created.

On the heels of creating the GCOD zoning the City-State Groundwater Working Group was also established. The Trust, the Commission, and several other City & State agencies signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) and agreed to meet every quarter. At each meeting groundwater levels are reviewed. The agencies investigate & when warranted, repair underground infrastructure where groundwater levels are depleted. As a result, the Commission, along with the other agencies, have made several repairs over the years to underground infrastructure that has been found to be deficient. We have seen groundwater levels increase throughout our areas of interest because there are less leaks.



I am encouraged that the Commission's proposed 2022-24 CIP will address several long-standing areas where we have depleted groundwater levels. In addition, the Commission's investment in green infrastructure will also aid in maintaining groundwater levels. The less leaks we have, coupled with recharging more water into the ground, the better for the groundwater table and the wood pile supported buildings.

A personal thank you to John Sullivan and Irene McSweeney of the Commission. Both have been wonderful colleagues over the years in coordinating with our organization to address these matters. I look forward to continuing collaborating with them and other members of the Commission. Thank you for providing this forum and the opportunity to comment.

Very truly yours,



Christian Simonelli
Executive Director

