



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

251 Causeway Street, Suite 900

Boston, MA 02114-2119

JANE SWIFT
GOVERNOR

BOB DURAND
SECRETARY

Tel. (617) 626-100

Fax (617) 626-118

<http://www.magnet.state.ma.us/env>

October 9, 2002

Tim Mitchell, Co-Chair
Gary Saunders, Co-Chair
Boston Groundwater Trust
222 Newbury Street
Boston, MA 02116

Dear Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Saunders:

I am writing as a follow up to a meeting that I hosted on September 26, 2002 to discuss the serious issue of depleted groundwater levels in Boston neighborhoods. Members of the Massachusetts Legislature, members of the Boston City Council, representatives of the Congressional delegation, and Antonia Pollak, Commissioner of Boston's Environment Department, attended this meeting. As I expressed at the meeting, I am also deeply concerned about both the current and potential impacts that low groundwater levels can have on local residents, property owners and businesses.

Through the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) and the agencies that I oversee, I am prepared to commit to a number of services that I hope will assist in gathering much needed information about this issue, as well as working on strategies to address identified problem areas.

As you know, Governor Swift recently signed an omnibus \$753 million Environmental Bond Bill into law. Members of Boston's legislative delegation inserted a specific earmark that authorized my office to expend up to \$1.6 million for groundwater monitoring in the City of Boston. This funding had the full support of the Boston delegation, Mayor Menino, and the Boston City Council. Although EOEA's capital budget is currently constrained, particularly during this difficult fiscal climate, I am committing today to a spending plan for the entire \$1.6 million. The funds will be released in three installments, with \$500,000 made available immediately, \$500,000 made available in fiscal year 2004, and \$600,000 made available in fiscal year 2005.

In addition to this significant financial commitment, I have directed my agencies to share groundwater data compiled during public works projects with the Boston Groundwater Trust and the public. This includes groundwater data that is currently being collected by the Metropolitan District Commission as part of the design for improvements to the Arlington Street Underpass on Storrow Drive.

 Printed on Recycled Stock 20% Post Consumer Waste

My office is also charged with reviewing new, large-scale, construction projects under the regulatory authority granted EOEA through the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). I have directed my MEPA staff, when reviewing projects in Boston that trigger an Environmental Impact Report, to request that the project proponent continue to maintain on-site groundwater monitoring wells beyond the period of construction and to afford the Boston Groundwater Trust long-term access for data collection. This will further enhance the groundwater monitoring well network in the City without additional expense to the Boston Groundwater Trust.

I realize that the issue of low groundwater levels is not a new problem, nor is it a problem caused by any one entity, public or private. We must, however, work collectively to identify problem areas and develop solutions. Toward this end, my office will continue to work with the City of Boston, through its Environment Department, to bring public agencies together to share information, identify problems, and develop the best strategies to address them.

I thank you for your service and commitment to the Boston Groundwater Trust. I also want to commend your elected officials for sharing with me their concerns and insight on this most important issue. My office will be in touch with you directly in the coming days to discuss next steps. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact my office or Jim Hunt, Assistant Secretary for Government Relations and Public Affairs, at (617) 626-1100 if you have any questions or require further information.

Very truly yours,

Bob Durand

CC: Mayor Thomas M. Menino, City of Boston
Commissioner Antonia Pollack, Boston Environment Department
Councilor Michael Flaherty, President
Councilor Maura Hennigan
Councilor James Kelly
Councilor Michael Ross
Councilor Chuck Turner
Senator Dianne Wilkerson
Senator Jack Hart
Senator Steven Tolman
Representative Byron Rushing
Representative Paul Demakis
Congressman Michael Capuano
Jim Hunt, EOEA
Jay Wickersham, EOEA
Commissioner David Balfour, MDC