

BOSTON  
GROUNDWATER TRUST

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February 12, 2004

City Councilor Michael P. Ross  
Boston City Council  
1 City Hall Plaza, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02201

Dear Councilor Ross:

The Boston Groundwater Trust has considered steps the City can take to raise the level of the aquifer that protects piles under buildings from bacterial rot. This rot can weaken the underground piles to the point where buildings collapse and have to be torn down, which has happened already the Fenway and Chinatown. It can cause buildings to need expensive foundation repairs, such as happened to the Boston Public Library building in the 1920's.

Part of any strategy for raising and stabilizing the aquifer involves natural recharging --- letting more rain water enter the ground instead of being conducted to Deer Island. We believe that one place this can be done is under sidewalks. If new sidewalks are constructed with special drains and drywells, similar to septic systems, we are sure it would put a substantial amount of water into the ground.

By the terms of the Declaration of Trust of the Boston Groundwater Trust, we are required to "make recommendations regarding short term and long term corrective measures" to reduce the risk of damage in the City due the groundwater levels. At the most recent Boston Groundwater Trustees Meeting, the following resolution was unanimously passed:

**RESOLVED:**

**That wherever the City rebuilds public sidewalks in land filled areas, the City shall install dry wells or other systems to recharge the aquifer.**

If you would favor this idea, we request that the proposal be assigned to a committee of the Council to study. We can provide witnesses to testify about the need for this measure. The committee could draw on the expertise of city officials on points of design, construction, and costs of recharging sidewalks. We hope the Council would enact ordinances, budgets, and aids to the implementation of this program.

Thank you for your consideration.



Gary L. Saunders  
Co-Chairman

Sincerely,



Tim I. Mitchell  
Co-Chairman