

495/METROWEST PARTNERSHIP

Leaders for Regional Prosperity

April 7, 2009

Senate Chair Karen Spilka
Joint Committee on Economic Development
and Emerging Technologies
State House, Room 511C
Boston, MA 02133

House Chairman Brian S. Dempsey
Joint Committee on Economic Development
and Emerging Technologies
State House, Room 42
Boston, MA 02133

RE: Senate Bill 2019

Dear Chairwoman Spilka and Chairman Dempsey:

On behalf of the 495/MetroWest Partnership, I would like to offer our support for provisions of Governor Patrick's legislation, Senate 2019, *A Message from His Excellency the Governor recommending legislation to mobilize economic recovery in Massachusetts*.

While much attention and work within state and municipal government has been focused on developing an implementation plan for the Commonwealth in regards to the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009, swift passage of certain provisions of Senate 2019 is essential to derive the maximum benefits from these federal funds.

As the public-private advocacy and development organization for the 495/MetroWest region, the Partnership works with municipal, business, legislative, and non-profit leadership to foster the region's continued economic success and sustainable growth. In doing so, infrastructure issues, particularly roads and bridges, transit, wastewater treatment, and water supply, have been constant priorities for our work with high technology employers, municipalities, legislators, and agency officials. These issues are crucial to the economy of the entire state as well as the 495/MetroWest region, since we have become an economic engine for the Commonwealth, with a \$16.4 Billion annual payroll and one out of every ten jobs in the state.

Given our region's economic importance and the fact that our aged and limited water infrastructure is a major constraint for commercial, industrial, and residential development, it is critical that this bill's provisions for the Massachusetts Water Pollution Abatement Trust be approved by committee. This provision would allow the Trust to charge less than the 2% statutory interest rates, and until it is enacted, the Commonwealth is not eligible for \$186 million in clean water and drinking water grants.

These funds are essential to addressing massive unmet needs in Massachusetts, since we're one of the oldest states in the country and exposed to harsh climatory conditions, we have unique needs for updates, repairs, and expansions of water infrastructure. These needs are particularly acute in the 495/MetroWest region, since most communities are not part of the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority system and have experienced rapid commercial, industrial, and residential growth over the last two decades, leading to real constraints on water supply and wastewater treatment. The Partnership has documented these needs in a report *WaterMarks 495*, and our community-by-community analysis, *WaterSmart Indicators*, which is available online at [http://www.arc-of-innovation.org/5 WaterSmart Indicators 495-MetroWest 9-07.pdf](http://www.arc-of-innovation.org/5%20WaterSmart%20Indicators%20495-MetroWest%209-07.pdf). These water infrastructure constraints are having long-term ramifications for our region's continued growth, despite our status as a growing employment center for the state's top companies across a

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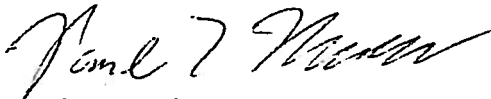
range of fields, including life sciences, financial management, manufacturing, information storage, software development, and such cutting edge fields as renewable energy and energy cell development.

Fortunately, the stimulus package offers unprecedented resources to address these needs, since past federal support has receded over the years, and the state has only been able to meet a portion of the demand, as shown by the high number of applications vs. awards and the requests for assistance beyond the 2% loans. The widespread need for such innovative funding, outside the current statutory 2% rate, is best exemplified by Marlborough's \$10 Million MORE grant to expand the capacity of their westerly wastewater treatment facility, and the life science initiative's inclusion of \$5.2 Million for needed sewer line capacity for Genzyme's Framingham facility.

Accordingly, this legislation's provisions for the Water Pollution Abatement Trust are critical to not only accessing unprecedented federal funds, but to addressing unmet needs of municipal governments across the Commonwealth, and creating infrastructure necessary for significant expansion of jobs. The passage of this language would also directly improve environmental conditions; utilize projects at a high degree of design and readiness; restore our position of leadership on water infrastructure and technology; and improve our competitiveness nationally and internationally.

We respectfully request the committee's support of these provisions of Senate 2019, and could provide any further background on the need for these resources and reforms to address water infrastructure needs in the stimulus plan. Thank you for your leadership to the Commonwealth during these difficult economic times, and we stand ready to work with you, your committee, the Legislature, and the Patrick Murray Administration to support these important initiatives.

Sincerely yours,



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