



# NSWRTF

## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2026



These quarterly newsletters help keep members and stakeholders informed about the work of the North Shore Water Resiliency Task Force (NSWRTF). Under the leadership of Senator Bruce Tarr and the full legislative delegation representing the Ipswich River Watershed communities, the task force is working collaboratively to improve long-term water supply resilience and ecosystem health across the region.



[Overall Progress](#)

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## PROGRESS SO FAR

Since signing the charter in 2022 the NSWRTF has accomplished the following:

- **[Shared Understanding](#)**: Developed a joint narrative describing regional water challenges and the task force's goals.
- **[Water Supply Analysis](#) and [Streamflow Study](#)**: Completed a regional analysis of water needs and alternative supply and water-sharing scenarios. Assessed how increased reliance on reservoirs and out-of-basin sources could improve streamflow.
- **Infrastructure Assessment**: Reviewed current infrastructure planning efforts among member communities and how they intersect with regional needs.
- **Technical Support**: Established standing subcommittees focused on PFAS treatment and demand management.
- **Consensus Building**: Engaged the Consensus Building Institute (CBI) to facilitate the development of coordinated solutions for sustainable water supplies and streamflows among nine Lower Basin communities and the Ipswich River Watershed Association.
- **Decision Support Tool**: Engaged EKI Environment & Water to build a web tool to help visualize, evaluate, and compare infrastructure scenarios.
- **Financing Expertise**: With free support from the New England Environmental Finance Center, engaged Quantified Ventures (QV) to help explore funding and financing options for future water infrastructure work.

# RECENT UPDATES

## LOWER BASIN SUBCOMMITTEE (LBS)

Since November, CBI met with subcommittee members individually, in subgroups, and as a whole. The group began formulating a range of short- and long-term scenarios for water-sharing and supply enhancement worthy of further exploration. EKI has continued developing a web tool to evaluate the scenarios of interest. Recent progress includes connecting the tool to modeled streamflow outcomes and working with suppliers on what metrics should represent their systems' resilience to drought.

## PFAS SUBCOMMITTEE

The PFAS subcommittee did not meet this quarter, but the subcommittee facilitator alerted Task Force members to two grant opportunities for PFAS remediation.

## CONSERVATION & DEMAND MANAGEMENT

This subcommittee completed interviews with 8 more communities this quarter, to learn about their water efficiency priorities, challenges, ideas for regional cooperation, and interest areas for technical assistance. All but 2 suppliers have now been interviewed.

## TASK FORCE AS A WHOLE

The full task force convened in December and February to discuss and ultimately approve a proposal by the City of Salem, which can be found in the [meeting summaries](#). As the 3-year term of the charter ended in September 2025, the Task Force began renewing it, offering a range of suggestions for substantive updates to improve the charter's ability to support the members in their work moving forward.

# LOOKING AHEAD: SPRING 2026

- **Charter:** The facilitation team will draft charter updates to reflect the input received at the February meeting. The Task Force will continue to meet and have opportunities to review, adjust, and finalize the language for an anticipated final adoption in late spring.
- **Lower Basin Subcommittee:** Over the next three months, CBI will continue working intensively with the subcommittee to finalize short-term and long-term infrastructure and management scenarios that hold promise for improvement in supply resilience and river flows. As technical questions emerge, the group will pursue information and consult with experts as needed. The plan is to reach a conceptual agreement on a phased infrastructure approach to be brought to the full Task Force by the end of June.
- **Decision Support Tool (DST):** In the next month, EKI will finish integrating streamflow model outputs into the tool, finalize metrics for supply resilience during drought, and launch the tool for LBS members and key constituents to define, visualize, and explore trade-offs among scenarios. Based on feedback by LBS members, EKI will finalize the tool for wider Task Force use. As preferred scenarios are identified by the Task Force, the DST will be retooled as a resource to educate and engage the wider public.
- **PFAS Subcommittee:** The PFAS Subcommittee will continue supporting Task Force members on matters of PFAS, as they look for cooperative supply solutions. The subcommittee will also continue to track and report on U.S. EPA regulation updates.
- **Earmark Subcommittee:** This subcommittee will reconvene in the next month to review and oversee contract extensions for EKI and CBI, based on the ongoing needs of the LBS.
- **Community Engagement:** As top scenarios are defined, Task Force facilitators will help support members in forming outreach strategies to inform and engage their constituents.



QUESTIONS  
& FEEDBACK?

Visit the Task Force website at:

<https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/north-shore-h20/>  
or reach out to the Sara Cohen at [sara.cohen@mass.gov](mailto:sara.cohen@mass.gov)