



MAY 2026

NSWRTF

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



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.

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 two critical technical analyses to support decision making.
- **Infrastructure Assessment:** Developed a report outlining infrastructure planning efforts among member communities including any bearing on the wider region.
- **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.
- **Financial Support:** Through efforts of the convening legislative delegation, secured \$600,000 of state funding for technical support of the Task Force.



QUESTIONS
& FEEDBACK?

Visit the Task Force website at:
<https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/north-shore-h2o/>
or reach out to the Sara Cohen at sara.cohen@mass.gov

RECENT UPDATES

LOWER BASIN SUBCOMMITTEE (LBS)

Since February, the subcommittee met 3 times as a whole. The group reviewed analysis of potential improvements to water resilience that could be achieved through efficiency and demand management efforts and began exploring strategies for collaboration in this sphere, including coordinating with the CDMS on a grant proposal. They also continued to seek mutually beneficial scenarios for water-sharing and supply enhancement. EKI completed a beta version of the Decision Support Tool and has begun revisions to address feedback.

CONSERVATION & DEMAND MANAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE (CDMS)

The subcommittee analyzed the interviews they completed with Task Force communities, identifying trends in water efficiency priorities and challenges. They presented findings to the LBS and worked with them to outline a grant proposal to help develop a structure to coordinate among Task Force members on water efficiency priorities.

EARMARK SUBCOMMITTEE

The Earmark subcommittee met in March to review and approve contract extensions for the two Task Force subcontractors, CBI and EKI.

PFAS SUBCOMMITTEE

The PFAS subcommittee did not meet this quarter, but the facilitator kept Task Force members apprised of announcements by the EPA advancing their regulatory revisions.

TASK FORCE AS A WHOLE

The Task Force convened in April to continue revising its Charter and hear from Quantified Ventures (QV) on their plan to support the funding and financing needs of the Task Force. They met in early May to hear about and discuss: 1) [predicted climate change impacts to water resources in MA](#); and 2) [the MWRA's approach to drought management](#). They met in late May to review the joint proposal by the LBS and CDMS to advance a grant application to support the Task Force in collaborating on water efficiency priorities and voted unanimously to support the application. [Meeting summaries are here.](#)

LOOKING AHEAD: SUMMER 2026

- **Charter:** The Task Force will meet in June to provide input on the next draft of charter revisions, reflecting the discussion at the April meeting. Members will work toward full consensus on the revisions with final adoption of an updated charter anticipated in the fall.
- **Lower Basin Subcommittee:** CBI will convene the subcommittee in June and then meet in smaller groups over the summer. The members continue to explore scenarios for water sharing, including near, mid, and long-term timeframes. They are also looking at options for coordinating water efficiency and demand management actions in the region. The plan is to reach a conceptual agreement on phased regional coordination to be brought to the full Task Force for approval by mid fall.
- **Decision Support Tool (DST):** In the next month, EKI will finish addressing initial tool feedback from the facilitation team. In the summer, they will conduct a hands-on pilot test and Q&A session for interested Task Force members. Based on feedback at that session, EKI will finalize the tool for 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 public.
- **PFAS Subcommittee:** The subcommittee will meet to review how best to continue supporting Task Force members, based on recent EPA regulatory announcements.
- **Conservation and Demand Management Subcommittee:** The subcommittee, in close coordination with the LBS, will complete a grant application to the MAPC Accelerating Climate Resilience grant program to help develop a framework for regional coordination on water efficiency and demand management actions. If funded (award announcements in August 2026), they will coordinate with the LBS and the full Task Force on implementation.