



Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions

Supporting Conservation Commissions Through Education and Advocacy Since 1961

May 20, 2026

Via Electronic Mail

The Honorable Representative Aaron Michlewitz, Chair
House Ways and Means Committee
State House, Room 243
24 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02133
Aaron.M.Michlewitz@mahouse.gov

RE: Opposition to some sections in S.3064, An Act to build resilience for Massachusetts communities

Dear Chair Michlewitz and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

MACC is a statewide non-profit organization that supports more than 2,000 volunteer conservation commissioners in their mission to preserve wetlands and open space. Each of the 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts has a conservation commission responsible for administering the state Wetlands Protection Act and municipal wetland bylaws and ordinances, as well as managing municipally owned conservation land. Our association protects Massachusetts' natural resources through our education and advocacy efforts, and we have been doing this work since 1961.

I am writing to you to provide comments about S.3064, *An Act to build resilience for Massachusetts communities* (also known as the Mass Ready Act, and the Environmental Bond Bill). This bill is being evaluated by your committee. Please consider my concerns about several sections in the bill.

S.3064 is a significant bill that proposes \$3.6 billion in bond funding for important environmental programs, but there are some unintended consequences due to two amendments that were added in the last days of the Senate review. The amendments effectively prevent municipalities from enforcing local water resource protection bylaws/ordinances that exceed state standards for priority housing projects, and on top of that, the amendments penalize those municipalities when applying for any of the funding in the Mass Ready Act/Environmental Bond Bill, even when the grants have nothing to do with priority housing projects. Restricting these funds will undermine other important public policy goals such as repairing dams and seawalls, making our communities more flood resilient, and removing PFAS from our water supplies.

It is important that these sections, or portions of the sections, should be eliminated from S.3064:

- **SECTION 60** (lines 2298-2303). This section exempts Priority Housing projects from local wastewater disposal rules that are more stringent than state Title 5 standards. The view that local environmental regulations are not based on science is a fallacy. At a time when the number of impaired water bodies is increasing, and the occurrence of potentially toxic cyanobacteria blooms is on the rise, reducing environmental protection will adversely affect local water quality. Let's not put housing in areas that are prone to flooding. **Remove SECTION 60 from the bill.**
- **SECTION 68** (lines 2630-2640) and **SECTION 69** (lines 2684-2692). These sections exempt Priority Housing projects from local wetlands bylaws that exceed the requirements of the Wetlands Protection Act (WPA) and regulations. By law, all these bylaws **MUST** be stronger than the state

regulations. The view that local environmental regulations are not based on science is a fallacy. Studies show that water quality from stormwater and wildlife habitat are better protected by increased distances to development. Let's not flood out new housing projects. **Remove the portions of SECTIONS 68 and 69 that exempt Priority Housing projects from wetlands bylaws from the bill.**

- **SECTION 69** (lines 2656-2786). **Remove statements restricting or eliminating use of local wetland bylaws that are stricter than state wetland regulations.**

- **SECTION 108** (Lines 3516-3529) *All Environmental Bond Bill grants to municipalities (or municipal planning agencies) would have a preference modifier added for communities that adopt non-restrictive zoning and wastewater and wetlands rules that do not exceed state standards.* Why are we penalizing municipalities that work hard to protect water supplies and wetlands and have passed local bylaws and ordinances, by impeding their chances to obtain funding for important environmental and infrastructure programs under this bill? Even when the grants have nothing to do with priority housing projects, restricting these funds will undermine other important public policy goals such as repairing dams and seawalls and making our communities more flood resilient. It makes no sense. *We should not penalize municipalities for protecting water quality or wetlands.* **Remove this Section and this penalty from the bill.**

As written, the bill will potentially impact residents in the future priority housing, as well as the community, by creating new and avoidable risks of flooding and contaminated water resources if existing local wetland and wastewater protections are eliminated. We support building housing in areas with adequate water, sanitary, and transportation services, but not in areas that might impact water quality or be impacted by flooding risks.

Please contact me with any questions or if you need additional information. Thank you for your consideration of these issues.

Sincerely,

Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions



Dorothy A. McGlinicy
Executive Director

dorothy.mcglincy@maccweb.org