

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE MASSACHUSETTS CLEAN WATER TRUST

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Friday, January 4, 2019
Time: 1:30 PM
Location: Massachusetts Clean Water Trust
1 Center Plaza, Suite 430
Boston, Massachusetts 02108
Notice: Due public notice given
Attendees Sue Perez, Executive Director, Trust
Steven McCurdy, Director of Program Development, Trust
Maya Jonas-Silver, Director of Finance & Administration, Trust
Also Present Nathaniel Keenan, Deputy Director, Trust
Stephanie Cooper, Deputy Commissioner, MassDEP
Jonathan Maple, Policy Analyst, Trust

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

- 1. Bottle Filling Stations School Assistance Program:** Ms. Cooper informed the Committee about MassDEP meetings with drinking water advocacy groups who provided data on lead in schools and water filling stations. Rough numbers included the average cost of a filling station being \$1,500, assuming one filling station for every 100 students – leading to an average of 6 units per school for Massachusetts' 1,847 public schools. Using these numbers, Environment Massachusetts estimated a water filling station program to cost \$16.6 million. Ms. Cooper noted that roughly 950 of the schools that participated in testing had elevated levels of lead from drinking water fixtures.

Using the base assumptions provided by Environment Massachusetts, the cost of just replacement fixtures would be roughly \$8.5 million. The cost of installation, technical assistance and potential operation and maintenance may drive that number significantly higher. Though the committee did note that not all schools had not participated in the Lead and Copper testing program, and that it is possible that many schools may not participate in a new program or may have already taken the needed remediation steps.

Ms. Perez suggested that it may be easier to have schools request funding, via their City or Town, for fixtures based on their own unique needs. Ms. Perez, introduced the program utilized by California's School Drinking Water Assistance program, and asked Mr. Maple to present a potential framework based on this policy.

Mr. Maple presented a framework that would offer grants, capped per school, that requires the host City or Town to provide a per school remediation/installation plan, budget, and application for water filling stations. The program would work with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts

Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC) for prioritization of grant funding. An additional policy recommendation was to stagger funding to allow schools that may need technical assistance to have time to submit plans before the limited funding is exhausted.

The committee discussed the merits of straight grants versus providing a list of water filling units under a negotiated contract with vendors. Ms. Cooper noted a meeting between Commissioner Suuberg and advocacy groups this week and will provide updates based on those discussions. Ms. Jonas-Silver offered to speak Operational Services Division (OSD) about Statewide contracts regarding technical assistance and filling station vendors. Municipal governments can utilize statewide contract for procurement and may offer the best value in streamlining the delivery of bottle filling stations. The Committee will meet next week to continue the discussion.

LIST OF DOCUMENTS AND EXHIBITS USED:

1. Presentation: School Drinking Water Grant Program

The meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Minutes Approved: 02/21/2019