



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
WATER RESOURCES COMMISSION  
100 CAMBRIDGE STREET, BOSTON MA 02114

---

**Request for Determination of Insignificance  
Under the Interbasin Transfer Act  
MGL Chapter 21 Sections 8B - 8D**

**Crescent Ridge Dairy Sewer Connection  
To the Town of Stoughton's Wastewater Collection System**

**WRC Decision  
April 11, 2019**

**Decision**

On April 11, 2019, the Massachusetts Water Resources Commission (WRC), voted unanimously of those present (9-0), to find that Crescent Ridge Dairy's (CRD) request to transfer 6,500 gallons per day (gpd) of milk waste from its facility in Sharon, in the Neponset River basin, to the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority's (MWRA) Deer Island Treatment Plant for discharge to the Massachusetts Coastal basin, was insignificant under the Interbasin Transfer Act (M.G.L. Chapter 21 §§ 8B-8D).

**Background**

On January 29, 2019, the WRC received a Request for Determination of Insignificance from Crescent Ridge Dairy (CRD), for a wastewater transfer from their farm in the town of Sharon, in the Neponset River basin. CRD operates a milk processing facility on Bay Road, in the town of Sharon. The physical location of the facility is within the Neponset River basin. CRD receives its potable water supply from the town of Sharon, which has sources within the Neponset River basin and Taunton River basin. Wastewater is currently discharged to the Neponset River basin via an on-site septic system. This septic system is now proving inadequate to treat the milk plant processing waste being generated by the facility, due to water quality concerns. Therefore, CRD requested to discharge this wastewater across town and basin lines to the Massachusetts Coastal basin through the MWRA system, via the Town of Stoughton. The town line between Sharon and Stoughton runs down the middle of Bay Road (Figure 1).

**Proposed Transfer**

CRD applied for this Request for Determination of Insignificance under 313 CMR 4.08(2)(b), of the Interbasin Transfer Act regulations, which governs reviews of transfers of less than 10,000 gpd.

CRD has entered into a Sewer Connection Agreement with the town of Stoughton to transfer up to 10,000 gpd. The Agreement limits the connection to the CRD site (i.e., no surrounding properties can hook into this connection). As stated above, the town of Sharon

has water supply sources in both the Neponset and Taunton River basins. However, water currently originating in the Taunton basin is already being discharged to another basin (the Neponset River basin) and is not being returned to the basin of origin (Taunton River basin). Transferring some of this wastewater to the MWRA system (Mass Coastal Basin), will not change the amount transferred out of the Taunton River basin, i.e. water will still not return to the Taunton River basin. No additional water from the Taunton River basin will be able to be transferred out of basin as a result of this request. Also, CRD has stated that it will not be increasing its existing water supply connection with the Town of Sharon. Based on WRC interpretations for wastewater transfers going back to 1987 and recently enshrined in the revised Interbasin Transfer Act regulations (313 CMR 4.05(9)), water that originates in the Taunton River basin is considered exempt for the purposes of this project.

Based on the capacity of the Sharon water supply sources, Staff has determined that 65% of Sharon's water supply originates in the Neponset River Basin. Therefore the jurisdictional transfer amount for this project is 65% of the transfer volume, i.e. 6,500 gallons per day (gpd).

### **Potential Environmental Concerns**

According to CRD, the wastewater to be transported to the MWRA will strictly be milk plant processing waste. No human wastewater will be transferred. Human sanitary wastewater will continue to be discharged through CRD's on-site septic system. CRD currently has a groundwater discharge permit, but has been experiencing issues associated with the milk plant processing waste, including high biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) and pH. CRD investigated alternatives to the MWRA sewer, including Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources' Dairy Waste project, but was not eligible for this program because CRD does not engage in the actual milking of cows at this facility. Water quality concerns eliminated the option of an up-graded on-site groundwater discharge system.

Because there will be no expansion of the water supply connection with the Town of Sharon, this transfer will not affect any resource values at the site of the Town's wells. The area surrounding the CRD facility consists of open fields and residential developments. No special resource values at the site will be affected by this transfer.

### **WRC Decision**

After reviewing the proposal, the WRC determined that the volume of the transfer is less than 10,000 gpd, and that no environmental impacts are anticipated from this transfer: i.e. it will not have an increased impact on Sharon's water supply sources and it will not significantly change the environmental conditions of the area where wastewater is currently being discharged. Therefore, **the WRC finds that this project is insignificant under the Interbasin Transfer Act.** If, in the future, CRD (or its successor) determines that either the water supply connection with the Town of Sharon needs to be enlarged, or the proposed wastewater connection with Stoughton needs to be increased, additional ITA review may be needed.

Figure 1

