



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**

**Sunrise Senior Living's Proposed Connection
To the Town of Norwood's Wastewater Collection System**

**WRC Decision
March 13, 2025**

Decision

On March 13, 2025, the Massachusetts Water Resources Commission (WRC), in a vote unanimous of those present, found that Sunrise Senior Living's request to connect to the Town of Norwood's wastewater collection system was insignificant under the Interbasin Transfer Act (ITA). The volume of the approved interbasin transfer is 10,000 gallons per day (gpd).

Background

On January 7, 2025, the WRC received a Request for Determination of Insignificance (RDI) under the ITA from Sunrise Senior Living (Sunrise), for a wastewater transfer from a proposed assisted living development in the Town of Sharon. The WRC discussed this project at its February 13, 2025, and March 13, 2025 meetings.

Sunrise proposes to receive its water supply from the Town of Sharon, which has its sources within the Boston Harbor and Taunton River Basins. Wastewater is proposed to be discharged across a municipal and basin boundary to the Massachusetts Coastal Basin through the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) sewer system, via the Town of Norwood.

Proposed Transfer

Sunrise is proposing to develop a 99-unit assisted living and memory care community in Sharon on an approximately 3.4-acre site situated at the intersection of Norwood Street and Edge Hill Road. Sunrise is applying for this RDI under 313 CMR 4.08(2)(b) of the ITA regulations, which governs reviews of transfers of less than or equal to 10,000 gallons per day (gpd). This review pathway was added to the ITA regulations in 2018 and states that the Commission may make a Decision that the transfer is Insignificant without requiring the information and analyses described in 313 CMR 4.08(2), Information Required to Act Upon a Request for Determination of Insignificance, subsections (c) and (d). Sunrise is proposing a new water supply connection with the

Town of Sharon. Sharon will not need to increase its allowable withdrawals under the Water Management Act to supply this development, so this transfer is not expected to further affect any resource values at the site of the Town's wells. In addition, Sharon's water usage has decreased over the past two decades, with 580 million gallons pumped in 2003 and 404 million gallons pumped in 2023. Pumping in each year since 2011 has been lower than the 28-year average volume pumped. Construction of the sewer connection will take place within existing roadways and therefore is not expected to impact any special resource values.

Sharon does not have a municipal sewer system, so Sunrise's only other option for wastewater disposal would be an on-site septic system. Due to site constraints, an on-site septic system is not feasible and therefore would not allow the development to move forward. Sharon is also not an MWRA sewer community, so providing sewer service to a property outside of the MWRA system requires legislative approval. The proposed special legislation would allow MWRA to provide sewer services to the project site by connecting to the Town of Norwood's municipal sewer system. The proposed special legislation limits discharges from the project to a maximum of 10,000 gallons per day.

WRC Decision

After reviewing the proposal, the WRC determined that the volume of the transfer will not exceed 10,000 gpd and that no environmental impacts are anticipated from this transfer. Therefore, **the WRC finds that the project is Insignificant under the ITA.** If, in the future, Sunrise Senior Living (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 Norwood needs to be increased, additional ITA review may be needed.

Figure 1

Town of Sharon – Well Water Supply

