

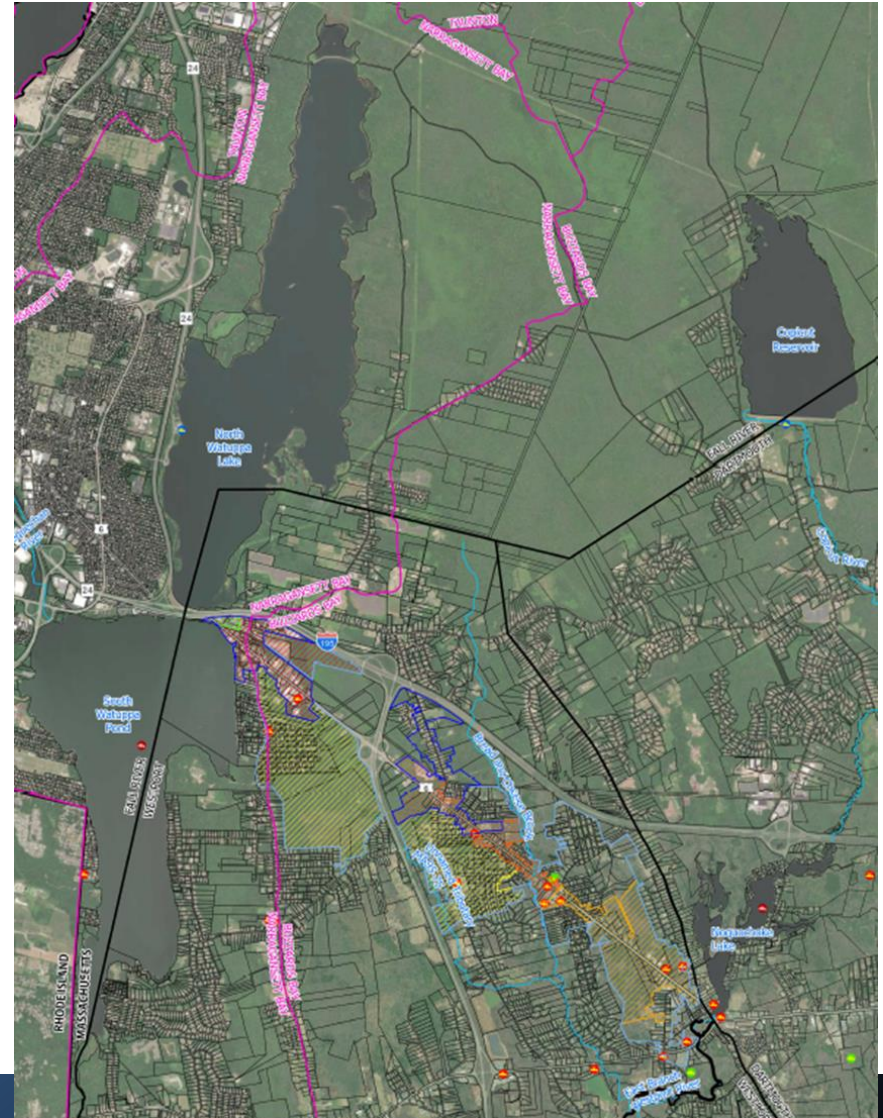
**Town of Westport  
Request for Determination of Insignificance  
Under the Interbasin Transfer Act**

**Staff Recommendation**

Massachusetts Water Resources Commission  
March 14, 2024

# Town of Westport, MA

- Has land area in the Buzzards Bay Basin and Narragansett Bay and Mount Hope Bay Shore Basin
- Does not have its own municipal water supply or wastewater system, already gets some water and wastewater services from Fall River
- Areas in northern Westport are densely developed; the proximity of private wells to cesspools/septic systems has resulted in private well contamination
- Requesting max day of 772,600 gpd from Fall River, approximately half of which is subject to the ITA



# Existing Conditions

## Water

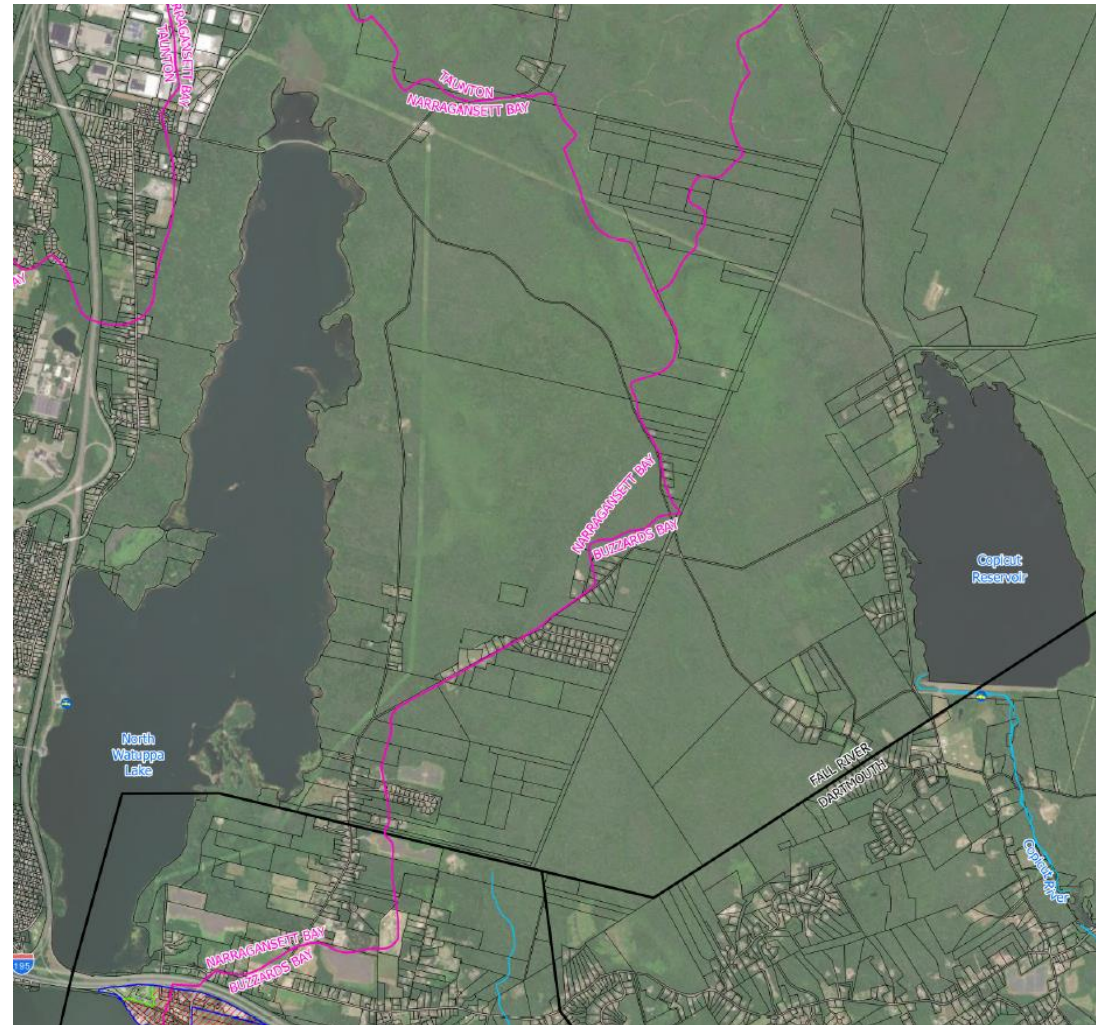
- 1985 water connection from Fall River to Westport – no documentation to confirm pre-ITA planning (3/8/84)
- This RDI includes the existing interbasin transfer of water supply for which the Town had not previously requested WRC approval

## Wastewater

- 1983 wastewater connection from Westport to Fall River, pre-dates the ITA
- Capacity documented at 360,000 gpd
- At time of connection, transfer was from Narragansett Bay Basin to MA Coastal Basin

# Fall River's System

- North Watuppa Pond in Narragansett Bay Basin, Copicut Reservoir in Buzzards Bay Basin
- Total firm yield is 18.2 MGD, 60% from North Watuppa (10.9 MGD) and 40% from Copicut (7.3 MGD).
- WWTP discharges to MA Coastal Basin

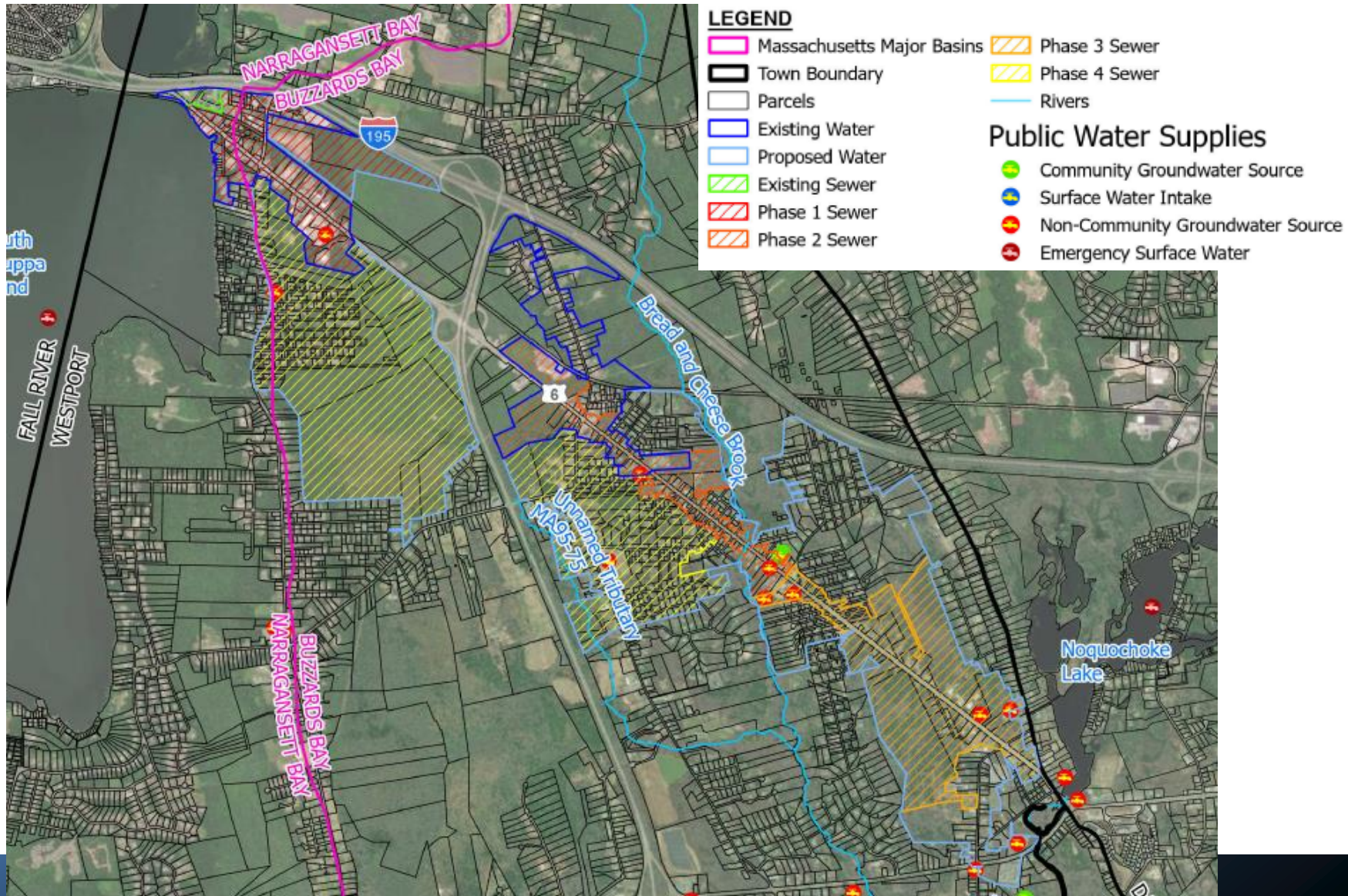




# Description of Proposed Transfer

- Water sourced from Narragansett Bay Basin and Buzzards Bay Basin in Fall River
- All water used within **Narragansett** Bay Basin in Westport will be discharged via Fall River's WWTP to **MA Coastal** Basin
- Water used within **Buzzards Bay** Basin in Westport will either be discharged to **MA Coastal** Basin or to **Buzzards Bay** Basin via septic systems or bleeding
  - Some properties getting only water supply; no properties getting only sewer services

# Map of Existing and Proposed Conditions



# Proposed Transfer Volumes

<b>Basin from/to</b>	<b>Amount (gallons per day)</b>	<b>Explanation of Transfer</b>
Narragansett Bay → Buzzards Bay	228,360	Increase of an existing transfer
Narragansett Bay → Massachusetts Coastal Basin	235,200 (EXEMPT)	Exempt due to pre-existing capacity
Buzzards Bay → Buzzards Bay	152,240 (EXEMPT)	Exempt - not crossing a basin boundary
Buzzards Bay → Massachusetts Coastal Basin	156,800	Increase of an existing transfer
	<b>772,600 (TOTAL)</b> -235,200 (EXEMPT) -152,240 (EXEMPT) <b>385,160 (NET)</b>	

# *Applicable* ITA Insignificance Criteria

## 313 CMR 4.08(3)

<u>Criterion</u>	<u>Proposal Meets?</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
(a) Is less than 1 MGD	Meets	Net interbasin transfer will be 385,160 gpd.
(d) Cumulative, approved annual amount of the transfers, including the proposed amount, are less than 1% of the average annual precipitation on the drainage area of the water body, and less than 5% of the drought year inflow <sup>1</sup> to the water body	Meets	There are no prior approved transfers from either basin. Amounts requested from each donor basin are less than thresholds.
(e) The 7Q10 flow, when relied upon in a program of pollution abatement, will not be significantly diminished or prolonged	Meets	Changes to downstream flow are expected to be imperceptible from the current operating condition as a result of the transfer.

<sup>1</sup>Drought year inflow is the drought basin yield: the annualized Q90 streamflows in a water source based on averaging estimated near natural monthly Q90 streamflows. It is an estimation of the water that would be available in a river basin that is unimpacted by water withdrawals during the probable driest period that is likely to occur.



# Applicable ITA Insignificance Criteria

## 313 CMR 4.08(3), continued

<u>Criterion</u>	<u>Proposal Meets?</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
(f) Special resource values will not be adversely affected	Meets	Changes to reservoir levels and streamflow in the donor basins are expected to be imperceptible from the current conditions as a result of the transfer.
(g) Measures to protect instream flows have been taken where appropriate and achievable, and any such measures are proposed as part of the applications	Meets	Changes to downstream flow are expected to be imperceptible from the current operating condition as a result of the transfer.
(h) The Commission shall consider the cumulative impacts of all past, authorized or proposed transfers on streamflows in the donor basin	Meets	Freetown, MA and Tiverton, RI receive water from Fall River's reservoir system (via transfers that pre-date the ITA). However, given the amount of storage in Fall River's reservoir system, it is not expected that this transfer would have a perceptible impact on the donor basins.

# Insignificance Criterion for Transfers Primarily Derived from Lakes, Ponds, Reservoirs or Other Impoundments

	<b>Threshold: 1% of Average Annual Precipitation</b>	<b>Threshold: 5% of Drought Year Inflow</b>	<b>IBT Request</b>	<b>IBT Request Below Lowest Threshold?</b>
<b>Narragansett Bay Basin</b>	255,034 gpd	228,492 gpd	228,360 gpd	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Buzzards Bay Basin</b>	156,910 gpd	168,980 gpd	156,800 gpd	<b>Yes</b>

Drought year inflow is the drought basin yield: the annualized Q90 streamflows in a water source based on averaging estimated near natural monthly Q90 streamflows. It is an estimation of the water that would be available in a river basin that is unimpacted by water withdrawals during the probable driest period that is likely to occur.

# Staff Recommendation

- Staff recommends that the WRC find this project to be insignificant under the ITA.
- Application meets all applicable criteria for insignificance.
- This will include approval of the existing interbasin transfer of water supply for which the Town had not previously requested WRC approval.

# Next Steps

- The WRC must make a decision on this request by April 18, 2024.
- A vote on the proposal will be requested at the next regularly scheduled WRC meeting on April 11, 2024.