

**Notice to Reviewers of the Proposed Amendments to
Water Resources Management Program Regulations
Regarding
Irrigation of Public Parks and Public Recreation Fields**

The **Water Resources Management Program Regulations** (310 CMR 36.00), establish enforceable standards, criteria and procedures to implement the Water Management Act (WMA), M.G.L. c. 21G, in order to comprehensively manage water withdrawals throughout the Commonwealth to ensure an appropriate balance among competing water needs and the preservation of water resources.

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, the **MA Department of Environmental Protection** (MassDEP) is now proposing to amend the Water Resources Management Program regulations. The proposed amendments would add a condition to Water Management Registrations restricting nonessential outdoor water use by registrants during times of drought declared by the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs. This will better align water use with the 2019 Massachusetts Drought Management Plan, and will promote balance among competing water uses and protection of natural resources such as streamflow, wetlands, fisheries and wildlife habitat during drought..

Essential water uses would be exempt from these proposed restrictions. Essential uses would include, uses for health and safety purposes; as required by permit, license, statute or regulation; for food and fiber production including vegetable gardens; for livestock maintenance; to meet the core function of a business as described in the regulations; for irrigation of public parks and public recreation fields; and to establish a new lawn as necessary to stabilize soil in response to new construction or following the repair or replacement of a Title 5 system.

The Department is specifically requesting comment on its proposal to consider the irrigation of public parks and public recreation fields as an essential use, recognizing the public investment in and public use of such facilities, and the need to balance the public benefit of a more resilient water supply with the public benefit of providing safe and accessible open space to those who do not have private recreation options, particularly in urban areas.

Written comment will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on Monday, November 7, 2022. All comments submitted must include the name and contact information of the person providing the comment. Please submit comment by e-mail to dep.talks@mass.gov and include *WMA Regulations* in the subject line. In lieu of electronic submission, mail comment to Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, Water Management Program, One Winter Street, 5th floor, Boston, MA 02108, Attention: WMA Regulations.

The proposed regulations are available at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massdep-public-hearings-comment-opportunities>. All comments previously filed in July 2021 are available at [310 CMR 36.00: Massachusetts Water Resources Management Program | Mass.gov](#).