



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

Offsets Policy Regarding Proposed Interbasin Transfers
Effective October 11, 2007

Policy

It is the policy of the Water Resources Commission to consider offsets to reduce or eliminate potential new increases in interbasin transfer.

Purpose

The purpose of the Interbasin Transfer Act is to minimize the transfers among the river basins of the Commonwealth. This policy furthers that goal by providing a means to avoid or minimize a net interbasin transfer through application of approved offsets as outlined below. This policy will be applied by the Water Resources Commission on a case by case basis, and is intended primarily for smaller transfers.

Application

The policy applies in the following situations.

#1. Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA) where the full increase of transfer can be offset.

Goal: Obviate the net increase in interbasin transfer through offsets.

Example: This could apply to a single development or building where the entire potential transfer can be offset.

Procedure: The applicant files a RDA and demonstrates that the full increase of the transfer can be avoided through offsets, resulting in no net increase. As a condition for a determination of non-applicability, the proponent will be required to document that offsets have been implemented.

#2. Request for Determination of Insignificance (RDI) where a transfer is close to meeting the criteria for insignificance, but can only fully meet the criteria for insignificance with offsets.

Goal: Meet the criteria for insignificance by reducing the net transfer through offsets.

Example: This could apply to transfers involving a small amount of water or wastewater that meet most criteria for a determination of insignificance, but need to perform offsets to fully meet all criteria for insignificance, such as instantaneous flow during the drought of record.

Procedure: The applicant files a RDI and demonstrates that all the criteria for insignificance have been met or will be met through offsets. The proponent will be required to document that offsets have been implemented.

What types of offsets could a proponent consider?

Proposed offsets will be evaluated by Water Resources Commission (WRC) staff on a case by case basis for the ability to reduce or eliminate the net interbasin transfer.

While recognizing that offset techniques and technologies may change over time, the following is a general list of offsets that may be considered by the Commission under this policy. As other quantifiable techniques are developed or proposed, the Commission may consider them under this policy.

1. Removing Wastewater / Reducing Demand

- a. In-basin wastewater disposal to reduce existing sanitary flows currently discharged out-of-basin in an amount that would equal or exceed the proposed transfer amount. Techniques could include but are not limited to decentralized treatment systems for individual homes, neighborhoods, or commercial facilities with on-site subsurface disposal.
- b. Water conservation to reduce transfers out of basin in an amount that would equal or exceed the proposed transfer amount. Techniques could include but are not limited to replacements with low flow appliances and fixtures; water reuse for toilets; and documented reductions resulting from industrial, commercial, institutional audits.

2. Removing Infiltration

- a. Pipeline rehabilitation (lining)
- b. Pipeline repair (point/segmental repairs of cracks and joints, joint testing & sealing, service lateral repair)
- c. Pipeline replacement; service lateral replacement
- d. Manhole rehabilitation/sealing walls (lining, grouting, mortaring, shotcreting)
- e. Manhole replacement (new precast concrete manhole)

3. Removing Inflow

- a. Manhole rehabilitation: installation of manhole inflow prevention devices; manhole lid/cover replacement; manhole cover and frame replacement or repair; manhole cover raising; replacement of cover on ponding manholes
- b. Redirection of sump pumps, roof, driveways, sidewalks, and other sources of inflow to dry wells, other appropriate surface areas, or storm drains.
- c. Repair/rerouting of cross connections

4. Source Capacity Reduction

Reduction of the approved regulated capacity of an existing grandfathered water supply or wastewater transfer.

Applicants are encouraged to discuss these issues with WRC staff. WRC staff will review the proposed project and consider the following:

- How the project was identified and how the offset was quantified,
- Effectiveness and life span or permanency of the project, and
- Merits of the project with respect to benefits to groundwater and/or surface water resources.

Offsets must be quantifiable. The proponent should quantify the offsets using existing guidance (if available), engineering calculations, and professional judgment. Existing data quantifying an offset should be used wherever possible. These data should be provided to WRC Staff at the earliest possible time.

Preference will be given to projects¹ that benefit aquifer recharge, especially in areas near water supply sources, stream flow, wetlands, and water levels in lakes and ponds, or other water-dependent resources.

¹ These projects must be consistent with applicable federal, state, and local regulations.