



# WESTPORT RIVER WATERSHED ALLIANCE

*Working together to protect and preserve the Westport River Watershed now and for future generations*

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July 11, 2023

Dear Representatives Michlewitz, Cusack and Soter and Senators Rodrigues, Moran and Tarr:

We, the 36 undersigned, are writing regarding H.3770/S.2406, *An Act to improve the Commonwealth's competitiveness, affordability, and equity* currently before this conference committee.

**We ask for inclusion of Sections 10-14 of S.2046 in the conference committee's final report, language amending the current septic system tax credit.** This language will increase the current septic system tax credit, mitigating the cost to homeowners who replace their failed cesspool or septic systems with a system consistent with the current State Environmental Code. The proposed increase in the credit reflects the increase in septic system design and installation costs since the current statute was enacted nearly 30 years ago. The Senate version (Sections 10-14, inclusive, of S. 2406) builds upon similar language included in the Governor's tax relief package.

As leading environmental organizations and municipal public health agencies concerned for the health of Massachusetts' waters, we know that properly functioning septic systems are essential to the quality of communities' drinking water, to swimmable, fishable rivers, streams, ponds, bays and oceans, and to the health of entire watersheds. Many communities across the Commonwealth – particularly the more rural and less densely developed communities – rely on septic systems, rather than sewers, to treat their waste water. In the 25+ years since the current septic tax credit was adopted, the cost of fixing failed systems has increased dramatically, while the current credit is subject to limitations that are no longer appropriate.

Here is a summary of the language in Senate Bill 2406, Sections 10-14 . . . changes to the current septic system tax credit, Chapter 62, Section 6(i):

- Increases the % of design and construction cost for upgrades or replacements of failed cesspools and other septic systems eligible for the credit from 40% to 60%;
- Deletes the current statute's reference to the 1995 Title 5 regulations and inserts "the State Environmental Code;"
- Increases the maximum system upgrade cost eligible for a rebate from \$15,000 to \$30,000;
- Increases the maximum annual credit from \$1,500 to \$4,000; and
- Increases the maximum amount of credit carryover over a 5-year period from \$6,000 to \$18,000.

**We ask for the inclusion of Sections 10 -14 of S.2406 in the conference committee's report of H.3770/S.2406, *An Act to improve the Commonwealth's competitiveness, affordability, and equity.***

Sincerely yours,

Deborah Weaver, Executive Director  
**Westport River Watershed Alliance**

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