



**Organization for the Assabet River**



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### **Senator Eldridge Promotes “Smart, Clean, Green” Water Infrastructure**

Maynard: Senator Jamie Eldridge plans to start hearings on how to finance improvements to the state’s water infrastructure in April. He made the announcement at a forum on “Smart, Clean, Green: Innovative Water Systems for our Communities” held Saturday in Maynard. Senator Eldridge chairs the new Senate Water Infrastructure Finance Commission charged with developing a comprehensive, long-range plan to finance water infrastructure for the Commonwealth and its cities and towns.

The forum showed how managing wastewater, stormwater and drinking water together as a single system can result in large energy savings, reduced infrastructure costs, environmental sustainability, new profit centers, and increased property values. Examples included housing developments, the Olympic Village in Victoria BC, Weston Town Center, Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, and other local and international examples.

The forum, hosted by Senator Eldridge and co-sponsored by the Organization for the Assabet River (OAR), Clean Water Action and Clean Water Fund attracted 75 participants from Westborough to Concord eager to learn about innovations in water management.

“Our cities and towns are facing a water and wastewater crisis created by antiquated infrastructure and a failure to properly invest in maintaining existing infrastructure,” said State Senator Jamie Eldridge. “It’s an urgent problem that demands our attention, because the integrity of our water infrastructure system has a large impact on our public safety and our public health.”

“We all know that our water infrastructure is very old. What we need to do is reinvent it--not just patch it up-- in a way that is much less wasteful and costly than what we have. We must also take into account the data that show that storms in New England are becoming more intense, which increases runoff and water pollution and decreases the supply of clean water,” said Alison Field-Juma, OAR’s Executive Director.

Speakers included Patrick Lucey, President of Aqua-Tex Scientific in British Columbia, who described how an Integrated Resource Management approach, tying together wastewater, stormwater, and drinking water with energy recovery and conservation, has made new developments highly profitable and desirable places to live. Brent Reagor, Concord’s Public Health Director, showed how a community’s needs can be met through innovative water re-use. Jim Kreissl, a retired EPA expert showed how small community wastewater treatment and reuse systems make more sense in many situations than large centralized ones. Bob Zimmerman of the Charles River Watershed Association described important new requirements to

recharge stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces, like parking lots, to significantly reduce phosphorus pollution of the Charles River.

“Clean water is a foundation for the residents of our communities, and is an essential element for growth and productivity in our economy,” said State Senator Jamie Eldridge. “I’ve hosted this forum to bring community members together to discuss the challenges facing our water infrastructure system over the coming decades, and steps we can take to protect our clean water supply in Massachusetts. “

“In the late 1800s, Massachusetts was the innovative source of many water treatment technologies that are used globally today,” said Becky Smith of Clean Water Action. “The state is well placed again to be an engine of innovation, and we should follow our own lead from clean and renewable energy advances into the energy-water nexus.”

Forum presentations are posted at [www.assabriver.org](http://www.assabriver.org).

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