

SENATE BILL SPONSORED BY SENATOR ELDRIDGE
HOUSE BILL SPONSORED BY REP. SENA AND REP. PIGNATELLI



**IT'S TIME TO PROMOTE EQUITABLE
ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER
FOR PRIVATE WELL OWNERS
ACROSS MASSACHUSETTS!**

**Support "An Act Promoting Drinking Water Quality for All"
Bill S.482 / H.902**

**THIS ACT
WILL**

- ✓ Authorize MassDEP to develop health-based regulations to ensure private well water is safe to drink.
- ✓ Be the first step in achieving uniform statewide private well regulations to protect health.
- ✓ Likely be modeled after Title 5 legislation (regulations for septic systems), which is widely accepted as an important protection for environmental and public health.
- ✓ Expand the existing MassHousing Septic Repair Loan Program (SRLP) to provide low-income homeowners with access to financial assistance to remediate contaminated private wells.

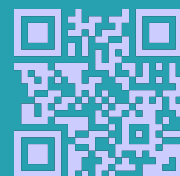
**THIS ACT
WILL NOT**

- ✗ Impose an undue burden on homeowners. There will be efforts to proactively educate homeowners, address lab testing capacity, and develop strategies to mitigate paperwork for homeowners and health agents.
- ✗ Specify what the exact regulations will be.
- ✗ Contain details about contaminants, testing requirements, and reporting. These details would be developed by MassDEP, likely with input from water experts, stakeholders, and the public.

**HOW YOU
CAN HELP**

🔊 Whether you rely on a private well or a public water system for your drinking water, this is an issue of health equity!

Voice your support to our state legislators by scanning the QR code or visiting the link below! Our website comes with pre-loaded messages to make it easy for you to be heard.

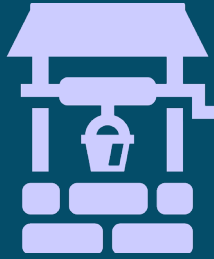


WhatsInYourWellWater.org

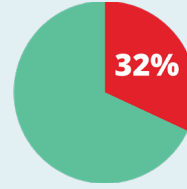
WHY IS THIS LEGISLATION NEEDED?

CURRENT LACK OF REGULATIONS IN PRIVATE WELLS

Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution established “the right to clean air and water”, yet half a million residents who rely on private wells may not know if their drinking water is safe from contaminants.



Unlike with public water systems, there are currently no statewide regulations to ensure private well water is safe. Individual Boards of Health have the authority to develop local regulations, but many are outdated or nonexistent.



PRIVATE WELL PROGRAM UNCOVERS CONTAMINANTS

From 2020–2022, we conducted 502 water quality tests across several Massachusetts towns. We found that **~32% of wells had levels of contaminants exceeding state health standards and/or suggesting potential health risks.**

In addition, MassDEP’s recent PFAS Private Well Sampling Program has found that **~5% of wells had PFAS levels exceeding state health standards.**



BOTTLED WATER IS NOT AN APPROPRIATE SOLUTION

Many people who discover contaminants in their wells resort to drinking bottled water, which is expensive. Plastic also harms the environment; 80% of plastic water bottles used in the United States end up in landfills.

HEALTH IMPACTS OF CONTAMINATED WATER

Contaminant	Examples of Potential Health Risks
PFAS (forever chemicals)	Developmental effects in fetuses & infants. Effects on the thyroid, liver, kidneys, certain hormones, & the immune system.
E. coli	Gastrointestinal illness
Nitrate	Can cause death in babies younger than 6 months
Radon	Cancer
Total Coliform Bacteria	Gastrointestinal illness
Uranium	Cancer, kidney toxicity
Manganese	Neurological effects
Arsenic	Cancer, skin damage, circulatory system problems

INEQUITY IN COMMUNITIES

Residents who live in municipalities with public water systems or with local private well regulations are more likely to have access to safe drinking water than residents who don't.



OTHER STATES WITH PRIVATE WELL REGULATIONS

Several other states (including Oregon, Rhode Island, and New Jersey) have sensible, health-based regulations for private wells. These states require private well water be tested for contaminants upon sale or transfer of a home. In addition, property owners must disclose the results of the well water test prior to the sale or transfer. Let's add Massachusetts to the list!



OREGON

Regulations Enacted: 1989
Private Wells in OR: 350,000



RHODE ISLAND

Regulations Enacted: 2002
Private Wells in RI: 48,000



NEW JERSEY

Regulations Enacted: 2002
Private Wells in NJ: 400,000

In addition, New Jersey requires different counties test for different contaminants in areas which have varying contamination concerns.

