

2021 -- S 0656

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LC002434
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

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A N A C T

RELATING TO WATERS AND NAVIGATION -- BRISTOL COUNTY WATER SUPPLY

Introduced By: Senators Coyne, and Seveney

Date Introduced: March 18, 2021

Referred To: Senate Housing & Municipal Government

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 46-15.5-6 of the General Laws in Chapter 46-15.5 entitled "Bristol
2 County Water Supply" is hereby repealed.

3 ~~**46-15.5-6. Existing facilities of the Bristol County water authority.**~~

4 ~~(a) The Bristol County water authority will continue to maintain its reservoirs, wells and
5 well sites, transmission lines and water treatment plants in good, sound and safe condition in
6 accordance with its past practices. The Bristol County water authority shall continue to take all
7 steps necessary to protect its legal right to withdraw water from its existing reservoirs, wells and
8 well sites, and shall protect the watershed surrounding said reservoirs to the extent it has legal
9 authority to do so and shall maintain its transmission lines from its existing reservoirs, wells, well
10 sites and water treatment facilities; provided, however, that if in order to protect its legal authority
11 to withdraw water from the existing reservoirs, the Bristol County water authority shall be required
12 to maintain all or part of its facilities in accordance with federal Safe Drinking Water Act standards,
13 42 U.S.C. § 300f et seq., the capital cost thereof shall be paid for by the state water resources board.~~

14 ~~(b) The Bristol County water authority in co-operation with the water resources board shall
15 prepare a plan to protect, enhance and improve its existing reservoirs, wells, well sites, transmission
16 lines and treatment plants. Upon approval of such plan, the authority shall cause to be prepared
17 definitive construction plans and drawings and shall apply for and prosecute to completion all
18 federal, state and local permits necessary to permit such construction to be lawfully undertaken;
19 provided, however, if at any time, the Bristol County water authority shall have satisfied the~~

1 ~~limitation on its financial commitment as set forth in § 46-15.5-6.1, then it shall no longer be~~
2 ~~required to undertake such planning, design and permitting unless the water resources board shall~~
3 ~~lawfully provide one hundred percent (100%) of the cost thereof.~~

4 ~~(c) Upon completion of the construction authorized by such plan, the Bristol County water~~
5 ~~authority shall utilize the existing system as so improved in the overall management of its water~~
6 ~~supply and distribution system in compliance with its water supply management plan approved~~
7 ~~pursuant to chapter 15.4 of this title. If, after all permits for such improvements and enhancements~~
8 ~~have been received the water resources board shall determine to purchase such existing reservoirs,~~
9 ~~wells, well sites, transmission lines, and distribution of water treatment facilities, the Bristol County~~
10 ~~water authority is authorized to sell or lease any one or more of such reservoirs, wells, well sites,~~
11 ~~transmission lines, or treatment facilities to the board pursuant to the provision of § 46-15.1-7 and~~
12 ~~the board is authorized to the extent not otherwise permitted by law to acquire such facilities and~~
13 ~~improve such facilities under the provisions of chapter 15.3 of this title except as specifically~~
14 ~~provided for in this section. From and after the date of the activation of the additional and~~
15 ~~emergency connection, the Bristol County water authority shall have no further obligation to~~
16 ~~expend funds for improvements to its reservoirs, pipelines connecting any one or more of such~~
17 ~~reservoirs and water treatment facilities unless and to the extent that such funds shall be provided~~
18 ~~by the water resources board pursuant to existing provisions of the general laws or such provisions~~
19 ~~as may be hereinafter enacted.~~

20 ~~(d) The state water resources board shall provide funding necessary to maintain the~~
21 ~~reservoirs, wells and well sites and pipelines connecting any one or more of such reservoirs, wells~~
22 ~~and well sites, and water treatment facilities of the Bristol County water authority system so as to~~
23 ~~meet all federal standards related to safe drinking water. Notwithstanding any other provision of~~
24 ~~law, any amounts so expended by the state water resources board shall be deemed eligible~~
25 ~~expenditures within the meaning of § 46-15.3-4(4).~~

26 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO WATERS AND NAVIGATION -- BRISTOL COUNTY WATER SUPPLY

1 This act would repeal the provisions of the general laws which requires the Bristol County
2 water authority to continue to maintain its reservoirs, wells and well sites, transmission lines and
3 water treatment plants in good, sound and safe condition in accordance with its past practices, and
4 to prepare a plan to protect, enhance and improve its existing reservoirs, wells, well sites,
5 transmission lines and treatment plants within its jurisdiction.

6 This act would take effect upon passage.

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