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495/MetroWest commission talks water resources

Representative Kate Hogan, Senator Karen Spilka, and Assistant Secretary for Communities and Programs Juan Vega co-chaired a meeting of the 495/MetroWest Suburban Edge Community Commission at the 495/MetroWest Partnership office in Westborough on Friday, January 27th focused on water resources.

Representative Carolyn Dykema (D-Holliston), who sits on the commission and represents several towns in the 495/MetroWest region, hosted Friday's meeting in Westborough. "Thank you to Representative Hogan, Senator Spilka, Assistant Secretary Vega, and the 495/MetroWest Partnership for joining us here in Westborough for this productive and informative meeting," said Rep. Carolyn Dykema. "It was great to have the opportunity to hear from experts in the field on the links between water infrastructure and economic development in the 495/MetroWest region. Investment in water is a critical part of creating opportunities for sustainable growth, but too often it does not get the attention or funding it deserves."

At the meeting, the Commission heard from state agencies and organizations involved in water policy in Massachusetts. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) Deputy Commissioner for Policy, Beth Card, discussed the status of stormwater, wastewater, and improving drought conditions in the 495/MetroWest region. Massachusetts Water Works Association (MWWA) Executive Director Jennifer Pederson spoke about current state of water systems in the region and its impact on public health, safety, and ensuring a robust economy. In addition, Communications Director for the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) Advisory Board, Matthew Romero, presented the UMass Boston Collins Center Report, which identifies the economic benefits and impacts of water and sewer infrastructure investment.

"The ongoing work of the 495/MetroWest Suburban Edge Community Commission continued on Friday, with informative presentations by MassDEP, MWWA, and the MWRA Advisory Board," said Representative Kate Hogan (D-Stow). "The presentations - ranging from stormwater and wastewater, to drought conditions, to the economic benefits of water infrastructure investment - offered the Commission a comprehensive overview of the status of water resources in 495/MetroWest. Thank you to our presenters, as well as our host, Representative Carolyn Dykema, for sharing your leadership and expertise with the Commission as we seek to develop policies to advance our region."

About the Commission

The 495/MetroWest Suburban Edge Community Commission, co-chaired by Senator Karen Spilka, Representative Kate Hogan, and Assistant Secretary for Communities and Programs Juan Vega as part of a joint effort on behalf of both branches of the state legislature and the administration, was established by the legislature in [Section 233 of Chapter 165 of the Session Laws of 2015](#). The Commission will study the development challenges experienced by the Commonwealth's 35 "edge communities,"—communities that are not adjacent to Gateway Cities with a population up to 35,000—including transportation, water, cellular, and energy infrastructure, transit services,

residential development, reuse of former industrial facilities and historic mills, brownfields reclamation, downtown redevelopment, and other such constraints. Through June 2017 the Commission will hold regular meetings in towns across the 495/MetroWest region to hear from state, regional, and local agencies and organizations that have experience with the various development challenges the Commission seeks to address. With the help of its research partner, the UMass Dartmouth Public Policy Center, the Commission will then develop policy responses and recommendations to ensure that edge communities can participate in state development initiatives and benefit from state resources. The Commission will focus its investigation and study on the 35 municipalities served by the [495/MetroWest Partnership](#) and develop a pilot program to address the issues to be studied and investigated by the Commission.



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