

To: Local Media

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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - Wareham Water Superintendent Named to Water Infrastructure Finance Commission***

WAREHAM, MA – Governor Deval Patrick has appointed Wareham Water Superintendent Michael Martin as the Massachusetts Water Works Association representative to the newly created Water Infrastructure Finance Commission. The Commission, established by Section 145, Chapter 27 of the Acts of 2009, is to develop a comprehensive, long range water infrastructure finance plan for the Commonwealth and Municipalities.

“Massachusetts, like other states, has long neglected planning for the replacement of its water, sewer and drainage systems,” said Martin. “I’m gratified to be working with Senator Eldridge who chairs the Commission and the environmental community, and all the other stakeholders in this very important work.”

According to state statistics, there are over 40,000 miles of aging water and sewer pipes in the Commonwealth. Much of which is asbestos cement, clay, or cast iron installed between 1920 and 1970.

The leakage from these pipes is substantial, and the usual remedy to the problem is replacement. However, replacing just the current undersized and leaking infrastructure, is estimated to be a cost of \$8 billion.

The same old refrain that the federal government needs to give the state more money may not be an option going forward. The primary vehicle for funding projects, State Revolving Funds (SRF), is a shrinking resource, and while helpful to communities due to a lower interest rate, it is still a loan that must be paid back.

Martin believes that in addition to solving the most obvious financial problem of replacing failing infrastructure, the Commission should examine the potential for leveraging economic and environmental concerns.

One thought is that if there was less regulatory, administrative, and other mandated non-construction costs, projects would be bid lower. Martin would like to try to steer the panel to looking at replacing pipe in the smaller and medium size communities to encourage economic development in those communities. The design and construction of these projects could employ local people quickly. “We could upgrade old pipes in 20 towns for the cost of one new treatment plant. I look at this as being the foundation for leveraging the infrastructure multiplier.” An approach he believes would also reduce water pumping from, and wastewater leakage into local watersheds. New pipe also reduces energy costs.