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Proposed Legislation Would Enable Statewide Drinking Water Protections and Financial Assistance for Massachusetts Households With Private Wells

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Right now, many Massachusetts residents who rely on private wells are consuming water that may be unsafe. **Over 500,000 people throughout the Commonwealth rely on these wells, yet there are no statewide regulations to ensure private well water is safe from harmful contaminants such as PFAS, arsenic, radon, uranium, and more.** In contrast, public water systems are regulated by the state and are subject to routine monitoring.

In January, Senator Jamie Eldridge, Representative Dan Sena, and Representative Smitty Pignatelli filed legislation which would provide equitable access to safe drinking water for all Massachusetts residents – regardless of where they live and what their financial resources are.

An Act Promoting Drinking Water Quality for All ([SD.2387/HD.3322](#)) would enable the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) to develop regulations which would provide minimum statewide water quality

standards for private wells supplying drinking water.

The regulations themselves would be developed by drinking water experts at MassDEP, likely in consultation with a technical advisory group and with a process for public input. To maximize public benefit, the bill would require MassDEP to evaluate practices to minimize the paperwork burden for affected parties.

In addition, the bill would expand the existing MassHousing Septic Repair Loan Program (SRLP) to provide low-income homeowners with access to financial assistance to remediate contaminated private wells.

"The importance of testing your well water is reflected in this important legislation put forth by Senator Eldridge, Representative Sena, and Representative Pignatelli," said Brian D. Scales, President & CEO of RCAP Solutions. "Too many homeowners take for granted that their water is safe and clean. Water is all around us, we bathe in it, cook with it, and drink it on a daily basis. The only way to ensure all this water is clean and safe to consume is to have it tested."

"We are grateful for the leadership of Senator Eldridge, Representative Sena, and Representative Pignatelli in addressing long-standing drinking water inequities," explained Amie Shei, PhD, President & CEO of The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts. "The state regulates the wastewater leaving a home, yet it does not regulate private well water entering a home and being consumed. This legislation closes an important gap in access to safe drinking water."

RCAP Solutions and The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts are working together to improve access to safe drinking water for private well owners. From 2020 to 2022, the [Private Well Program to Protect Public Health](#), which has received nearly \$1.5 million in grant funding from the Foundation, has conducted over 500 water quality tests across several Massachusetts towns and

found that approximately 32% of wells had levels of contaminants exceeding state health standards and/or suggesting potential health risks. The Coalition for Safe Drinking Water was recently formed as a way to engage a wide range of stakeholders in working together to ensure safe drinking water for all Massachusetts residents.

For more information about this legislation, our private well programming, and the Coalition for Safe Drinking Water, please visit:

www.whatsinyourwellwater.org.

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