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Subject Press Release – State Invests in MassDEP Study to Ensure Safe Drinking Water from Private Wells
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Press Release: State Invests in MassDEP Study to Ensure Safe Drinking Water From Private Wells

FY2025 State Budget Includes \$100,000 for MassDEP, an Important Step Towards a Statewide Private Wells Program

Full Press Release

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With the FY2025 state budget, which was signed by Gov. Maura Healey on July

29, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) will finally have dedicated funding to explore how best to ensure safe drinking water from private wells. The agency will receive \$100,000 to conduct a study and make recommendations for a statewide program to ensure that drinking water from private wells is safe to consume. This study represents an important step forward in developing a statewide drinking water program for private wells to ensure that all Massachusetts residents have access to safe water.

Currently, 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 subject to state and federal regulations and are routinely monitored. As written in the budget, MassDEP will submit a report detailing its findings to the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources as well as the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means by Jan. 1, 2025.

The funding was made available through a budget amendment filed by Sen. Jamie Eldridge of the Middlesex and Worcester District. In the House, Rep. Meghan Kilcoyne (12th Worcester District), Rep. Smitty Pignatelli (3rd Berkshire District), and Rep. Dan Sena (37th Middlesex District) have been leading champions of safe drinking water for residents relying on private wells.

"I am grateful to RCAP Solutions and The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts for leading the effort over the past two years to protect the drinking water of hundreds of thousands of residents across Massachusetts who live in rural communities," said Sen. Eldridge. "I was pleased to secure funding in the fiscal 2025 budget for MassDEP to study state regulation of private wells, which is a key step toward passing the comprehensive legislation."

"Safe drinking water is something many of us take for granted, yet the reality is that nearly half a million Massachusetts residents rely on unregulated drinking water from private wells that could be contaminated and potentially cause negative health impacts," said Amie Shei, PhD, President & CEO of The Health

Foundation of Central Massachusetts. "This funding is an important investment toward ensuring that all Massachusetts residents have access to safe drinking water, regardless of where they live."

"Ensuring the safety and health of our homeowners throughout the Commonwealth is vital," added Brian D. Scales, President & CEO of RCAP Solutions. "This state-funded initiative to study private wells is a crucial step toward establishing comprehensive statewide regulations for drinking water. Clean, safe water should be a fundamental right for every homeowner."

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 Health 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 subsequently launched to engage a wide range of stakeholders in working together to ensure safe drinking water for all Massachusetts residents. The Coalition's efforts have been instrumental in raising awareness and garnering support for this critical initiative, which has the potential to significantly improve the health and well-being of communities across the Commonwealth.

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

About RCAP Solutions: RCAP Solutions is an integrated community development corporation working with a multi-faceted suite of services in communities throughout the northeastern part of the U.S. and the Caribbean. Established in 1969 (as Rural Housing Improvement), RCAP Solutions has

supported the power and potential of communities for over half a century as strategists of community-wide well-being. Our mission is to foster personal and public self-reliance and improve the quality of life for individuals, families, and the communities in which they live. For more information, visit:

www.rcapsolutions.org

About The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts: The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts is dedicated to improving the health of those who live or work in Central Massachusetts, with particular emphasis on vulnerable populations and unmet needs. Through its unique and impactful approach to grantmaking, The Health Foundation supports community-identified health issues, with health defined broadly to include social determinants of health and with a focus on promoting health equity. As a health conversion foundation launched in 1999 following the sale of the not-for-profit HMO Central Massachusetts Health Care Inc., The Health Foundation's grants have totaled over \$57 million to more than 230 unique organizations over its history. For more information, visit: www.thfcm.org

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