



Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Department of Environmental Protection

Southeast Regional Office

Address: 20 Riverside Drive, Lakeville, MA 02347 | **Phone:** 508-946-2700

Maura T. Healey

Governor

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Lieutenant Governor

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Secretary

Bonnie Heiple

Commissioner

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Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) Response to Town of Bridgewater Residents' Concerns Regarding the Bridgewater Water System:

Thank you for bringing your concerns related to the Town of Bridgewater Public Water System to MassDEP. Your concerns, in general terms, relate to the Town of Bridgewater Public Water System's present ability to safely and reliably meet the demands of its current customers. MassDEP has recently received numerous complaints related to the Bridgewater Public Water System. MassDEP staff have been working closely and diligently with the Town of Bridgewater to address concerns with its water system. Below is a brief summary of issues and actions being taken to address those concerns.

The Bridgewater Water System is presently operating subject to a December 5, 2025, Declaration of Water Supply Emergency, issued as a result of the inability of the Town to fill its storage tanks due to decreased production at some wells and elevated levels of iron, manganese and PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) in other Wells (Wells 10A and B). Pursuant to that Declaration of Water Supply Emergency, Bridgewater was able to establish an interconnection with the Town of Middleborough Water System. That interconnection has allowed the Bridgewater Water System to meet its current demand without using Bridgewater's Wells 10A and B. While this is not a permanent fix, it is the most expedient way in which the quantity issues can be addressed in the short term, without using Wells 10A and B which have been experiencing increases in the levels of PFAS, iron and manganese.

Prior to the need for the Declaration of Water Supply Emergency to address the water quantity problem, the Town had begun a pilot study of a treatment system for Wells 10A and B. Given the water quantity challenges the system experienced and changing water quality at Wells 10A and 10B, the Town shifted its treatment focus to developing a temporary treatment system to treat Wells 10A and B to remove PFAS, iron and

manganese. The treatment would allow the Town to bring those sources back on line without the PFAS, iron and manganese concerns. MassDEP has worked closely with the Town and its consultants with the expectation of getting the treatment system in place as quickly as possible with formal permitting and confirmatory testing to be completed while the system is in place. Given that treatment for PFAS (carbon filtration with PFAS specific media), iron and manganese (greensand filtration) are proven technologies, MassDEP has advised the Town that it could provide an interim approval of a temporary treatment system followed by confirmatory sampling after installation and ultimately full permitting. This should expedite the Town's restoration of the previous volume of water available from Wells 10A & B, as well as reduce the levels of iron, manganese and PFAS to within the maximum contaminant level (MCL) for PFAS and the Health Advisory Level for manganese.

In addition, when the Declaration of Water Supply Emergency was issued, MassDEP began working with EPA and identified a grant opportunity of up to \$2 million that may be available to assist Bridgewater in paying for the treatment of PFAS, iron and manganese. Bridgewater promptly applied for that grant and has been working with MassDEP to finalize the grant application for submittal to EPA. The latest revisions were submitted March 1st and the grant application is getting close to where MassDEP will be able to issue its approval and submit the grant application to EPA for review and confirmation.

Provided that Bridgewater continues to advance the temporary treatment system and explore permanent treatment system options for Wells 10A and B, that should address the water quality issues related to PFAS, iron and manganese. It should also allow Bridgewater to address the quantity issues it experiences when it does not use, or limits the use of, Wells 10A and B due to water quality concerns. In recent years, the Town has not used Well 10B due to water quality concerns. Following the installation of the temporary treatment on Wells 10A and B, Bridgewater expects that it can draw nearly twice as much water as it had been taking when it did not use Well 10B. The Town is advancing the treatment design, contracting and construction expeditiously and targeting late Spring for completion of the temporary treatment.

The Town is actively redeveloping wells to increase production. Bridgewater reports that it completed redevelopment of Well 3 during the last week of February, 2026. The successful redevelopment more than doubled the production from Well 3. Bridgewater's Water Treatment Team immediately moved from Well 3 to Well 8 and has finished the maintenance work on Well 8. The Town has reported to the Department that it intends to redevelop another one of its wells in 2026, which should further enhance production.

Bridgewater recently commissioned Apex Companies, LLC to conduct an engineering evaluation of the Water System in connection with an approved development near 70

Broad Street to determine the impact of that already approved project considering the current levels of production and usage. That study reported that with the anticipated use from the Broad Street development, Bridgewater will have an estimated 0.354 million gallons per day (MGD) of their permitted withdrawal volume remaining, thereby allowing it to meet the demand for existing customers and already approved projects. The report further identifies that systems customarily assess supply in the context of “firm capacity,” or the total water supply capacity when the largest water supply source is offline. An assessment of Bridgewater’s system with its largest source offline from its system yields a water deficit of 0.116 MGD, which the Town will be working to address. The study also assumes that the other sources are able to pump at their maximum capacity, and as explained above, Bridgewater has been working to address a reduction in its ability to pump that it has experienced at its existing wells. Adding treatment to wells 10A and B and redeveloping and conducting maintenance on wells 3 and 8 is expected to improve current water quality and quantity issues.

The Department has also received communications in the form of emails and copies of social media posts from Bridgewater residents alleging that MassDEP, under the authority of its Declaration of State of Water Supply Emergency, has the authority to revoke building permits in the Town of Bridgewater. Please note that while Mass. General Laws Chapter 21G, Section 15 (the Massachusetts Water Management Act) and its regulations at 310 CMR 36.40 provide that MassDEP may require a public water system operator who petitions MassDEP for a Declaration of Water Supply Emergency to submit a water supply emergency plan for MassDEP’s review and approval, and that said plan may include a provision establishing a moratorium on the issuance of building permits, Bridgewater’s request was to permit it to establish an interconnection with the Town of Middleborough which it anticipated would alleviate the emergency condition. The Emergency Declaration issued to the Town of Bridgewater on December 5, 2025 did not require the Town of Bridgewater to submit a water supply emergency plan. The December 5, 2025 Emergency Declaration issued to the Town of Bridgewater does not give MassDEP authority to revoke locally issued building permits as suggested in those emails and social media posts.

Some residents have also expressed health concerns regarding the Bridgewater water. Health information regarding manganese and PFAS has been distributed by the Town of Bridgewater in the form of Public Notices which are available on the Bridgewater Public Works Notifications website. Residents with specific health concerns are advised to speak to their doctor.

The Town of Bridgewater’s Carver’s Pond Water Treatment Plant is producing water near or over the PFAS MCL of 20 nanograms per liter (ng/L). MassDEP issued Bridgewater a Notice of Noncompliance on July 28, 2022, for the Town of Bridgewater’s Carver’s Pond Water

Treatment Plant exceeding the PFAS MCL. Bridgewater instituted immediate-term measures to control the PFAS levels, which were reportedly effective at maintaining compliance with the PFAS MCL for a time, but most recently violated the PFAS MCL during the fourth quarter of 2025. Bridgewater is now in the planning stages to install permanent PFAS removal treatment at both the Carver's Pond Water Treatment Plant and the High Street Water Treatment Plant.

The Department has heard your concerns regarding these matters and has been working closely with Bridgewater to address its immediate water quantity and quality issues, and to focus on long-term planning for the Town's water as well. While there is work that remains to be done by Bridgewater (completing the grant application, installing temporary treatment on Wells 10A and B, rehabilitating other wells that are not performing as they have historically, or even developing new sources), the Town has made significant progress in the design of temporary treatment, installation of the Middleborough interconnection and performed analysis of the system's current ability to meet demand. The Town has also determined that it will not authorize connections to new, non-approved projects and announced that decision at its December 16, 2025, Town Council Meeting. It is reflected in the minutes of the December 16th meeting, and those minutes were approved at the January 6, 2026, Town Council Meeting. These efforts indicate a resolve by current officials to address the challenges that the Town's water system is presently facing.

I hope that this provides a better understanding of the situation and thank you for your patience while MassDEP continues to work with Bridgewater to advance these short-term and long-term improvements to the water system.

Brian D. Harrington | Deputy Regional Director Bureau of Water Resources
Bureau of Water Resources | Southeast Regional Office
Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
20 Riverside Drive, Lakeville, MA 02347