

H.886: An Act Relative to Combined Sewer Overflows

A Sensible, Achievable, and Necessary
Response to Raw Sewage Being Dumped
into our waterways through CSOs



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H.886 Addresses the CSO Mess Head On

H.886 is realistic, outcome oriented, and consistent with current technologies and procedures

- Recognizing that some CSOs may need to be available in large storms to prevent sewer backups for some time, this legislation requires that in 10 years each of the CSOs then in the MWRA sewer service area must either:
 1. Have the treatment now provided at five CSOs; or
 2. Only activate during 25+year storms and not during smaller storms (as now is the case for five CSOs along Dorchester Bay)
- Ten years is an adequate amount of time to do more sewer separation, incorporate more green stormwater infrastructure such as rain gardens, close more CSOs, and plan, permit, and implement the necessary engineering fixes

Untreated Raw Sewage Dumped in Our Water

THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS after the legislature created the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) to end the dumping of sewage and sludge into Boston Harbor, and twenty-five years after the Deer Island Treatment Plant started treating the region's sewage to end Boston Harbor pollution:



DUMPING OF UNTREATED SEWAGE CONTINUES: Fifty CSOs discharge many hundreds of millions of gallons of sewage (human and industrial wastes) annually into Boston area rivers, streams, brooks, water channels, and Boston Harbor

Five of those fifty CSOs were engineered to dump untreated sewage only in greater than 25-year sized storms. The other 45 dump sewage into our waterways in smaller storms

Five of those fifty CSOs have minimal treatment to remove some solids and deactivate bacteria before the sewage is dumped into our waterways

Forty CSOs dump untreated human and industrial wastes into our waterways in larger and smaller storms without any treatment whatsoever

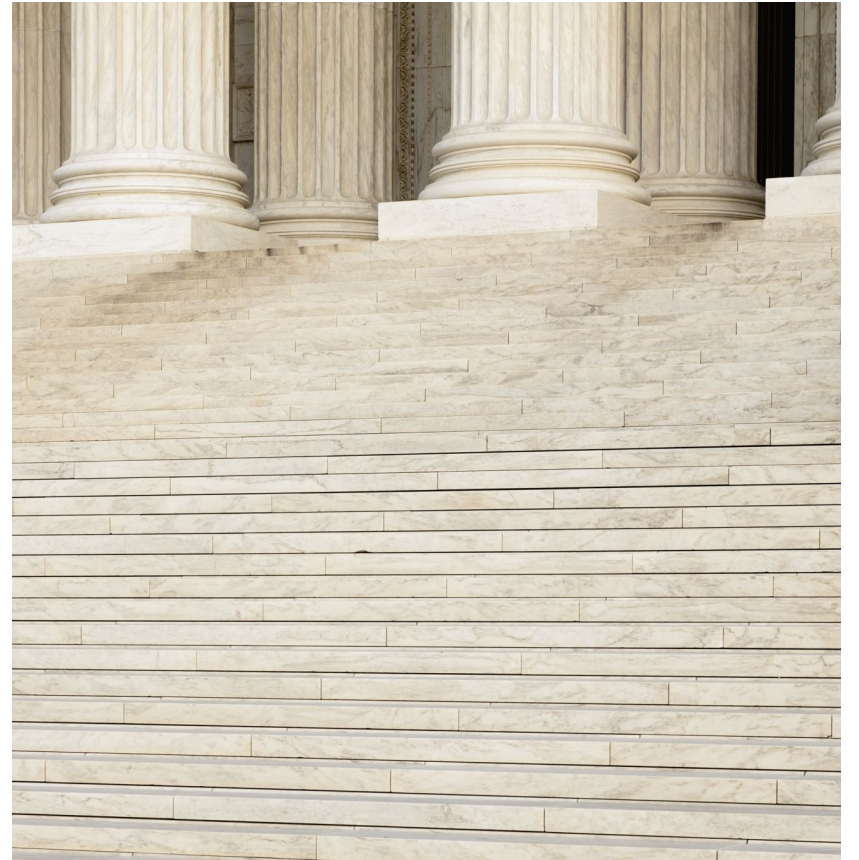
How much CSO sewage is dumped?

- CSO discharges vary by year, depending on storm amounts and storm intensities
 - Average year: 414 Million Gallons of Sewage dumped in waterways
 - 2021: More than ONE BILLION Gallons of Sewage dumped in waterways
 - Alewife Brook CSOs: 50.74 Million Gallons (MG) untreated
 - Upper Mystic River CSO: 67.57 MG treated
 - Mystic/Chelsea Confluence CSOs: 220.62 MG; of those 9.35 MG untreated
 - Upper Inner Harbor CSOs: 466.58 MG; of those 22.44 MG untreated
 - Lower Inner Harbor CSOs: 18.34 MG untreated
 - Fort Point Channel CSOs: 124.04 MG; of those 52.47 MG untreated
 - Reserved Channel CSOs: 1.12 MG untreated
 - Upper Charles CSOs: 11.12 MG untreated
 - Lower Charles CSOs: 108.30 MG; of those 20.2 MG untreated
 - Back Bay Fens CSO: 5.24 MG untreated



Will Federal Law Fix the CSO Problem? No.

- Federal standards allow CSOs to continue to dump raw untreated sewage
 - “Typical year” problem
 - Nine “minimum controls” problem
 - No treatment requirement or time limit mandate
- MWRA has told us it has no intention to go beyond what is minimally required by federal law. We have heard no different from the other CSO entities





The Time is Now for the Legislature to Act

- No Federal Pre-emption
 - States can be more protective of their environment and residents than required by the federal Clean Water Act
 - States can hold themselves and their entities (cities, authorities, etc.) to higher standards than federal requirements
 - We know more about the terrible impacts of CSOs on public health and on Environmental Justice populations
 - Together, we can address this unfinished business of the Boston Harbor clean-up
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