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LETTERS

Is a statewide water plan necessary?

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A view from the Enfield Look Out at the Quabbin Reservoir park, looking toward the former site of the town of Enfield. NANCY PALMIERI/THE BOSTON GLOBE

Put funding and policy first, please

The Globe’s editorial calling for a statewide water plan (“[Massachusetts needs a statewide water plan](#),” Opinion, Feb. 19) highlights real water-supply challenges. But

another plan is not what communities need most. The more immediate barriers are insufficient infrastructure funding and state policies that hamper responsible local water-supply development.

Across Massachusetts, aging drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater systems are beyond their intended lifespans. An estimated \$37 billion [will be needed over the next 20 years](#) to meet existing regulatory requirements — a figure that does not include the cost of removing newly regulated PFAS, already affecting many public water systems and often requiring treatment plants costing tens of millions of dollars.

Meanwhile, the state's allocation of federal State Revolving Fund dollars — the backbone of water infrastructure financing — is [being cut by more than 60 percent](#), which reduces statewide funds available for projects. Planning without protecting infrastructure funding will not solve the problem.

Communities also face restrictive water-quantity regulations, lengthy permitting, and rigid water-use policies that can discourage local supply development. Each community has unique needs and should be supported in developing a plan that meets those needs.

Water infrastructure underpins housing, economic development, public health, and emergency preparedness. A true statewide strategy must focus on sustained investment and regulatory flexibility — not simply production of another report.

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The writer is executive director of the Massachusetts Water Works Association, a nonprofit representing 1,600 drinking water professionals across the Commonwealth.

A matter of fairness

The Boston Globe editorial calling for a [statewide water plan](#) raises important and timely points, and a coordinated approach to water management in Massachusetts is long overdue.

But it overlooks a core issue: fairness. Communities like New Salem that host reservoirs and watershed lands carry lasting economic and land-use burdens for the benefit of the entire state. Yet the compensation they receive remains inadequate and outdated.

A truly sustainable statewide water plan must address not only infrastructure and resource management but also equity. If some communities are asked to sacrifice for the common good, the Commonwealth has a responsibility to ensure the recompense is fair and meaningful.

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The writer is chair of the Belchertown Select Board.

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