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Water Resources Stewardship

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The Boston Globe Letter to the Editor

Submitted to letter@globe.com

August 4, 2017

To the Editor:

David Abel's article "**State agrees with Trump administration to delay long-awaited water pollution rules**" (August 3, 2017) fails to mention why EPA postponed the federal MS4 permit. Instead, it implies EPA, MassDEP, and municipalities are dodging environmental protections. The reality is they are postponing implementation, because the permit is under appeal.

The article also contains inaccuracies. It suggests the new permit requires municipalities to remove illicit sewer connections, sweep streets, and educate the public. Municipalities have been doing this work for 14 years, under the 2003 MS4 permit.

Municipalities are on the frontline in protecting the environment and public health as they manage local water infrastructure. They are stewards of community resources – natural and fiscal. They must balance needs to ensure that ratepayer dollars are spent wisely.

MassDEP is postponing the state MS4 permit to align with EPA's date. This action provides consistency for communities to manage all of their regulatory requirements effectively. It is reasonable and fair. Failure to postpone the state MS4 permit would cause confusion, and potentially result in the inefficient use of limited resources.

Regarding the state managing the NPDES program, if MassDEP already had sole permitting authority, we wouldn't be in the current situation.

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