

OFFERED BY COUNCILOR EDWARD M. FLYNN



## CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY SIX

### **ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS BOSTON GROUNDWATER TRUST & GROUNDWATER INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE CITY OF BOSTON**

**WHEREAS,** Much of the land in areas of Boston was created through filling the land and is supported by wood pile foundations that rely on consistent groundwater levels to remain structurally sound. Many buildings that are built on filled land in Boston include Bay Village, Back Bay, the South End, Fenway, and the North End; *and*

**WHEREAS,** When groundwater levels drop and expose these wood pilings to air, they can begin to rot, potentially weakening building foundations and leading to costly structural damage; *and*

**WHEREAS,** Climate change, development patterns, drainage systems, and underground infrastructure may contribute to fluctuations in groundwater levels throughout the city; *and*

**WHEREAS,** In 1986, the City of Boston established the Boston Groundwater Trust, which works to monitor and address groundwater levels. The Trust also gives clearance to property owners to develop homes before appearing at the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA); *and*

**WHEREAS,** Recent reports indicate approximately 8,000 buildings supported on filled land and wood pilings are potentially at risk of structural failures if underground foundations rot due to declining groundwater levels and oxygen exposure. Repairs can cost upwards of \$200,000, last 12-18 months, and are rarely covered by insurance policies; *and*

**WHEREAS,** Residents, property owners, and city agencies would benefit from a comprehensive understanding of the current conditions, risks, and long-term strategies to protect buildings constructed on groundwater-dependent foundations;  
**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT**

**ORDERED:** That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss groundwater infrastructure in the City of Boston, and that the Boston Groundwater Trust, Department of Public Works, the Boston Water and Sewer Commission and other interested parties shall be invited to attend.

Filed on: March 11, 2026