

For Immediate Release

**Groundwater Update:
Citywide Groundwater Emergency TaskForce
Signs Legislative Team**

(Boston, August 28, 2006) — The Citywide Groundwater Emergency TaskForce ("Citywide-GET") today announced it has retained the law firm LeBoeuf, Lamb, Greene, and MacRae LLP to develop legislation addressing the problem of depleted groundwater in Boston. Boston-based environmental law firm Mackie Shea O'Brien, P.C., will assist in this effort. Both firms will provide their services on a pro bono basis.

The desired legislation is a core part of Citywide-GET's strategy to prevent groundwater drawdown before damage occurs, to require effective and comprehensive monitoring of groundwater levels, and to repair and maintain Boston's aging underground infrastructure.

Citywide GET is an ad-hoc citizen's advocacy group that has been pressing all levels of government to collaborate and resolve Boston's problem of groundwater drawdown. Insufficient groundwater causes the wood pilings, which support older buildings originally built on filled (or "made") land, to develop dry rot. When building foundations shift because of damaged pilings, owners are forced to choose between spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to underpin their properties, or condemnation and subsequent demolition. Without legislation that provides a right at law to sufficient groundwater, property owners have no basis for demanding that governmental entities or private parties who are drawing down the water stop their activities before significant damage occurs.

Citywide-GET enjoys wide support from both neighborhood and business associations. Our "collaboration across boundaries" approach, working with government at every level to confront this complex problem jointly, has earned both trust and respect. Support by key state legislators, including Representatives Martha M. Walz and Byron Rushing, Mayor Menino, the Massachusetts Office for Commonwealth Development, and Boston City Councilors has enabled Citywide-GET to make significant progress. During the past sixteen months, we have obtained increased funding for the Boston Groundwater Trust (the City-based groundwater monitoring entity) and its monitoring wells. We have secured passage of the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District, a zoning change that requires developers and homeowners undertaking new construction and substantial renovations to demonstrate that they will not draw down groundwater, and will install systems to capture natural precipitation. And Citywide-GET successfully pressed City and State agencies to create a "City-State Working Group" to begin to identify and resolve known groundwater drawdown areas, including the Storrow Drive underpass at Arlington Street, the St. Charles Street/Back Bay T Station "hot spot," and new areas, such as a recently discovered drawdown due to a damaged sewer in East Boston. Citywide-GET's persistence has paid off: it has resulted in an historic commitment by General Manager Grabauskas of the MBTA of \$ 2.97 Million for groundwater remediation at the St. Charles Street/Back Bay T Station depression and immediate efforts to recharge groundwater in the area. Initiative by Speaker DiMasi and support by other Massachusetts legislators have provided an additional \$2 Million for a demonstration project at this location in the South End.

According to Gordon Richardson, Chair of Citywide-GET, "the pro bono assistance of LeBoeuf Lamb, in association with Mackie Shea O'Brien, will enable Citywide-GET to expand our efforts to put in place effective, long-term solutions that protect not only individual property owners throughout the City of Boston, but the public interest as well."

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