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May 7, 2026

Via E-Mail: karen.spilka@masenate.gov

The Honorable Karen E. Spilka
President of the Senate
Massachusetts State House
24 Beacon Street, Room 332
Boston, MA 02133

Re: Silent Spring Institute PFAS water and health research in Hyannis

Dear Senate President Spilka,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Town of Barnstable to urge you to file an amendment to the state FY 2027 budget to support Silent Spring Institute's Massachusetts PFAS and Your Health Study. The Town of Barnstable has long been a proud partner for Silent Spring Institute's work in Barnstable and across Cape Cod and we supported the PFAS study here in Hyannis.

I have copied the Cape legislative delegation, specifically Senator Julian Cyr, who has helped advance legislation to pragmatically reduce per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) exposure. Proactive leadership and problem solving by the Cape delegation combined with Barnstable's work directly with Senator Cyr has begun to yield positive results.

My understanding is that while the House budget has been finalized, there is still time to file a $25,000 earmark in the Senate budget for Fiscal Year 2027. This would provide much-needed support to the Silent Spring team to continue their work in Hyannis. While they are also applying for federal funding, it is our understanding that federal funding for public health research is significantly reduced. We are asking that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to assist financially so that this critical research work may be completed.

The following language has been provided by Dr. Laurel Schaider describing the scope of work that could be completed with a $25,000 earmark.

Silent Spring Institute PFAS water and health research in Hyannis. $25,000 for FY27
Funding will support Silent Spring Institute to study health effects of PFAS exposure from drinking water contamination in Hyannis as part of the Massachusetts PFAS & Your Health Study. In FY2027, Silent Spring will complete reconstruction of past exposures to PFAS from drinking water in Hyannis to support epidemiological analyses. Silent Spring will also disseminate study findings to community members and present health-related resources to Cape Cod clinicians to support patient care.

Of course, this is a small amount of money compared to what Silent Spring would need for the second phase of the study in Hyannis and Ayer. I think it's important for the team to be able to keep the study going by following up with participants to collect updated health information and blood samples. This would address questions from residents of our community and help scientists better understand the long-term health effects from PFAS. Dr. Schaider shared the attached document with me that shows their vision for a larger study ($1 million per year, which is what they had been receiving from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)) to conduct the next phase of their study in Hyannis and Ayer in the first year and extend to other communities in following years.

I hope that you will file an earmark to support Silent Spring's study in the short term and work towards a larger amendment to support the study to conduct the next phase of the study, which would benefit people not just in Hyannis but across the Commonwealth.

Respectfully,

Mark S. Ells
Barnstable Town Manager

cc: Senator Julian Cyr
Senator Dylan A. Fernandes
Representative Kip A. Diggs
Representative Thomas W. Moakley
Representative Christopher R. Flanagan
Representative David T. Vieira
Representative Steven G. Xiarhos
Representative Hadley Luddy
Craig Tamash, President Barnstable Town Council
Karen Nober, Barnstable Town Attorney

SILENT SPRING INSTITUTE
Researching the Environment and Women's Health

Silent Spring Institute FY2026 and FY 2027 PFAS research in Massachusetts

To promote the health and welfare of Massachusetts residents, Silent Spring Institute—a national leader in PFAS research—is seeking state funding to continue the MA PFAS & Your Health Study, a cohort of nearly 800 residents from two Massachusetts communities with a history of contaminated drinking water. Now that funding from the CDC has ended, state investment is critical to track how PFAS blood levels in these areas are changing over time, identify factors that accelerate release of these chemicals from the body, and document long-term health impacts. This funding will preserve established research infrastructure, deliver answers that affected residents need, and generate findings to inform clinical care and regulatory decisions statewide and beyond. Without the investment now, the study will be halted and a future study would require much larger investment to re-engage with our participants.

URGENT ACTION IS NEEDED TO ADDRESS PFAS HEALTH EFFECTS IN MASSACHUSETTS

- PFAS contamination in drinking water poses serious health risks to Massachusetts residents. These "Forever Chemicals" have been linked to cancer, thyroid disease, immune system dysfunction, and developmental effects in children.
- Tens of thousands of MA residents have been exposed from contaminated drinking water. PFAS levels in some water samples from Hyannis, Westfield, Mashpee, Danvers, and Hudson were in the top 1% of U.S. public water supplies according to an EPA testing program in 2013-2015, and 11% of MA public water systems have exceeded state standards. With new, stricter EPA standards, more communities will have to address PFAS contamination and communicate with residents about implications.
- Massachusetts has a unique opportunity to lead the nation in understanding and addressing PFAS health impacts. The **MA PFAS & Your Health Study**, launched in 2019 by Newton-based **Silent Spring Institute** and Harvard as part of a CDC-led multi-state study, is tracking health outcomes in nearly 800 adults and children from Hyannis and Ayer—two communities with a history of water contamination.
- Federal CDC funding for the study has ended and future federal funding is uncertain in the short term, putting this critical research at risk. However, the foundation is already built: a well-characterized cohort, baseline health and exposure data, and trained research staff. With state support in FY2027, we can preserve this infrastructure and maintain continuity with our participants and deliver answers to affected communities about how PFAS may affect the health of adults and children that can inform PFAS response efforts and clinical care for residents across Massachusetts and nationwide.

FUNDING IS NEEDED TO SUSTAIN THE MA PFAS & YOUR HEALTH STUDY

- Just as Massachusetts led the nation in health discoveries from the Framingham Heart Study, the MA PFAS & Your Health Study is a valuable state resource that needs investment to be sustained.
- With additional investment from the state, Silent Spring Institute will be able to conduct critical follow-up with study participants by assessing their current PFAS levels and health conditions. Since the cohort is already established, we can efficiently build on this rigorous community study if we can keep the experienced staff in place without having to start from scratch. We can also expand our work to other impacted MA communities.
- By continuing our existing infrastructure now, we can accelerate research that will answer important questions about how quickly PFAS blood levels decline after addressing contamination and about long-term health effects in adults and children.

Massachusetts PFAS & Your Health Study

What have we learned so far?

- PFAS blood levels in Hyannis and Ayer remain high even though tap water has been treated for years.
- Higher PFAS blood levels were associated with higher blood pressure.

SILENT SPRING INSTITUTE IS A LEADER IN PFAS HEALTH RESEARCH

- **Silent Spring Institute** researchers have been at the forefront of PFAS research since 2009, when we were the first to find PFAS in Cape Cod drinking water.
- Silent Spring researchers have led NIH- and CDC-funded research studies on PFAS and published 16 highly cited peer-reviewed articles in leading public health research journals. Our PFAS research has been covered in *The Washington Post*, *New York Times*, and other prominent news outlets, and we have provided testimony to the MA PFAS Task Force and to other state and federal legislative hearings.
- Project leader Dr. Laurel Schaider is a nationally recognized expert on PFAS exposures and health effects. She testified before a Senate subcommittee hearing on PFAS in December 2024 and recently was interviewed by the PBS News program Horizons. Additional team members include Dr. Mary Beth Terry, Silent Spring Institute's Executive Director and leading cancer epidemiologist, and Ruthann Rudel, Director of Research and leading toxicologist on breast cancer relevant chemicals.

NOW IS A CRITICAL TIME TO SUPPORT PFAS HEALTH RESEARCH

With federal funding currently in question, funding from the state is needed to maintain continuity with our participants, track long-term health effects, and translate findings into actionable guidance for MA communities and healthcare providers.

Cutting edge research on health effects and mitigation. This research will address three key questions:

- **How have PFAS blood levels changed over time in Hyannis and Ayer following initiation of water treatment to reduce PFAS?** This information will help residents understand their changing exposure levels and inform public health officials about the effectiveness of remediation efforts.
- **Are there any dietary factors that may promote faster release of PFAS from the body?** Identifying dietary interventions could provide clinicians with evidence-based recommendations to help patients in PFAS-affected communities reduce their body burden more quickly.
- **What are the long-term health effects from PFAS exposures among adults and children?** Our initial results have revealed concerning links between PFAS exposure and higher blood pressure. Continued follow-up will clarify these associations and investigate other health outcomes, including increased breast cancer risk, that require clinical monitoring, enabling healthcare providers to offer more targeted screening and preventive care to patients with known PFAS exposures.

Supporting healthcare providers. Through our established partnerships with community organizations and clinical networks, we will disseminate findings to healthcare providers throughout the state. This will equip clinicians with the information they need to improve patient care in PFAS-impacted communities. Our team's medical screening guidance for clinicians was cited as a model for effective clinical guidance in a 2022 National Academies report, and our Continuing Medical Education course provides clinicians with critical information about PFAS. However, clinicians need greater awareness of these resources to effectively address patient questions and improve patient care. Our findings will also inform regulatory decisions and public health messaging across Massachusetts and more broadly.

Engaging communities across Massachusetts. With new, stricter EPA drinking water standards established in 2024, a growing number of Massachusetts communities are grappling with how to address PFAS contamination and understand the implications for their health. Through our established partnerships with community organizations across the state, we will disseminate resources to address common community concerns, which are also freely available on our PFAS Exchange website (pfas-exchange.org) in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. With additional funding, we also aim to reconnect with long-standing partners in multilingual and culturally diverse areas and build new partnerships to better meet the needs of environmental justice communities.

SILENT SPRING INSTITUTE RESEARCH PLAN

FY 2026 funding request - $250,000

For the remainder of FY2026, we are seeking funding to build on the foundational work of the MA PFAS & Your Health Study and extend our outreach to healthcare providers across Massachusetts. Our goals for FY 2026 are:

- **Publish findings on PFAS exposures and blood pressure** in adults and conduct additional data analysis to understand effects in children.
- **Conduct analysis to reveal mechanisms of PFAS toxicity**. With data already collected in the first phase of the study, additional funding would support our research team to analyze those results to uncover the biological pathways by which PFAS harm human health.
- **Offer Grand Rounds presentations at medical institutions** across MA and increase awareness of the resources for clinicians on our PFAS Exchange website. Clinicians are on the frontlines answering questions from patients, and clinician training is critical to improve patient care.

This funding would support Silent Spring Institute staff salaries, fringe, and indirect costs ($225,000) for community partners and research collaborators ($25,000).

FY 2027 funding request - $1,000,000

For FY 2027, we are seeking funding to conduct additional data collection from MA PFAS & Your Health Study participants in Hyannis and Ayer. This funding is critical to maintain continuity with our participants and to maximize the benefits and new knowledge from the original investment by CDC. Without additional funding from the state, we will lose an opportunity to conduct follow-up with our participants, and re-starting the study later would come at a much higher cost. Our goals for FY 2027 are:

- **Conduct follow-up PFAS blood testing** with 350 adults and 50 children who participated in the first round of the study in Hyannis and Ayer. These results will help us address questions about how PFAS blood levels have changed over time since the water districts installed municipal treatment.
- **Collect dietary diet information** from participants about the types and amounts of foods they eat. Prior studies have suggested that high-fiber diets may lower PFAS levels in blood, but most of these studies have not been conducted in areas with a history of water contamination. This information could inform clinical guidance to help people lower the levels of PFAS in their blood more quickly.
- **Conduct follow-up health screenings** by collecting height, weight, blood pressure, and other body measurements and collecting data on cancer and chronic health conditions. These data will provide critical new insights into long-term effects of PFAS exposures.

Funding for this research would support Silent Spring Institute salaries, fringe, and indirect ($780,000), PFAS blood testing for 400 participants ($120,000), dissemination of study findings through publications and community events ($25,000), and support for community partners and research collaborators ($75,000).

FY 2028-2030 funding request - $1,000,000 per year

For FY 2028-2030, we are seeking additional funding to extend our health study by offering blood testing in other communities in MA that have experienced PFAS contamination. This work will address community concerns about PFAS exposures and health effects and establish MA as a leader in PFAS health effects research. Our will also include dissemination of study finding and clinician education. Our goals for FY 2028-2030 are:

- **Conduct PFAS blood testing in additional PFAS-impacted communities** across Massachusetts, such as Mashpee, Hudson, Danvers, and Westfield. This would expand our understanding of PFAS exposures across the state and expand our ability to assess links between PFAS exposures and health effects.
- **Analyze results from communities across MA to reveal mechanisms of PFAS toxicity**. By combining data from our original study communities with additional communities and applying new statistical methods, we will provide critical new information on health effects of PFAS exposure.
- **Disseminate study findings to communities across MA** through community presentations, clinician engagement, social media, and updates to our PFAS Exchange online resource center.