

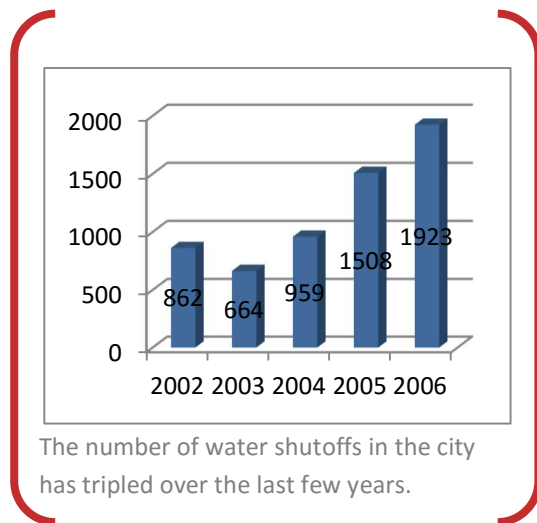
# The Color of Water

## Getting Boston to Uphold the Human Right to Water

In the early 90s, with prices rising, people understood that water was a key issue for Boston. Into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with growing awareness of water shortages in the south and west, with the Great Lakes at historic low levels, with the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority billions in debt, the issue is once again on the agenda.

This time round, there are crucial international victories to build on—for example, the United Nations recognizes that there is a *human right* to water. Moreover, an increasing number of governments in this hemisphere also recognize the right. Although, as we’ve come to expect, the United States is lagging in this regard.

Boston faces several challenges to live up to the Human Right to Water. It does not guarantee all residents a lifeline supply of water regardless of their ability to pay. There is also considerable inequality across neighborhoods that reflect long running inequalities based on color and income. If you live in Roxbury or Dorchester, you are near 10 times more likely to be threatened with having your water shut off than if you are a Back Bay or Beacon Hill resident. Moreover, over 2003-2006, the number of households actually cut off tripled – without a major increase in water rates. It fell back a little in 2007. Given the current debt burden of the major water provider, it is likely that there will be future water price hikes.



With this background, Massachusetts Global Action’s Color of Water campaign seeks to increase awareness about the problem and to get our city to live up to the Human Right to Water in meaningful and substantive ways. To get involved, contact [water@massglobalaction.org](mailto:water@massglobalaction.org) or call 617-482-6300.

### Threatened water cutoffs by neighborhood

Neighborhoods	Threatened Cutoffs	Percent of Population Affected
Roxbury - Dorchester: Franklin Field, Grove Hall, Codman Square, Lower Mills, Meeting House Hill, Adams Street; Roxbury Highlands, Franklin Park; Hyde Park, Readville, Mattapan	<b>42</b> per 1,000 residents	<b>16%</b>
S. Boston, Broadway-Marine Park, Andrew Square, East Everett; Jamaica Plain, Pondsides, Arboretum; East Boston; West Roxbury; Roslindale	<b>18</b> Per 1,000 residents	<b>7%</b>
Charlestown; Downtown; Back Bay; Beacon Hill; West Fens; Brighton; Commonwealth; Prudential; East Fens; Medical Area	<b>5</b> Per 1,000 residents	<b>2%</b>