



THE GENERAL COURT OF MASSACHUSETTS
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, 02133-1053

Sweeping Economic Development Bill Passes Massachusetts Legislature, Signed into Law

Life sciences and climatetech among \$4 billion in authorizations; support for small businesses, strengthening local public health, easing the healthcare worker shortage, ticket pricing transparency, allowing campaign funds to be used for childcare expenses, among other policies. Passed the legislature on 11/14/2024; signed into law by Governor Healey on 11/20/2024

Bond Authorizations

The legislation includes a total of \$3.96 billion in capital authorizations for leading Massachusetts industries including life sciences and climatetech.

- \$400 million in new tax credits to support new climate technologies and the offshore wind industry. (The bill provides \$400 million in capital resources to the MassCEC (Massachusetts Clean Energy Center) to utilize over the next ten years, with \$200 million authorized to support innovation and deployment of climatetech technologies and \$200 million to support the offshore wind industry)
- \$500 million in investments and credits for life sciences. It also adds health equity, biosecurity, digital health and artificial intelligence to the life science mission.
- \$150 million for the construction and rehabilitation of public libraries.
- \$100 million for a Rural Development fund for infrastructure improvements in rural communities.
- \$400 million for public infrastructure projects and job creation (MassWorks).
- \$150 million for library construction.
- \$40 million for food science innovation for rural communities.
- \$21 million in agriculture and fishing.
- Tax credits for local live theatre productions.
- \$40 million for a new center for quantum computing in western Massachusetts.

Policy in the Bond

- **Strengthening local and regional public health systems.** It overhauls the state's fragmented public health system to ensure every community and every resident has access to fundamental public health services regardless of race, income, or zip code.
- **Pathway for foreign-trained physicians.** It creates a pathway in Massachusetts for physicians previously authorized to practice medicine outside the United States to practice in an underserved region of the Commonwealth. It is based on a law that I filed this session, with advocacy from organizations like our region's Center for New Americans and Boston-based MIRA.
- **Childcare as a campaign expense.** Political candidates who are parents will be permitted to use campaign funds for childcare services that occur because of campaign activities. (Thirty other states and the federal government allow this use. Candidates who are women and people of color have been the primary users.)
- **Diversify educator workforce.** An alternative certification process for educators will increase quality and diversity in the K-12 educator workforce.
- **Project labor agreements.** Public agencies and municipalities are authorized to enter into project labor agreements for public works contracts when such an agreement is in the best interest of the public agency or municipality.
- **FAFSA support.** The bill requires each school district to notify students prior to graduating from high school of the availability of FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and to provide students with information on financial aid options.
- **Sustainability for farmers.** The bill allows farmers to diversify how they use their farms, including using land for agritourism and selling goods made from produce they have grown themselves.
- **Expand craft beer opportunities.** The legislation updates the law to allow for locally produced craft beer to be sold at farmers markets, like wine and cider.
- **Ticket transparency.** Concert ticket sellers must disclose the actual ticket process when listing tickets online and bans automated ticket purchasing software, otherwise known as bots. Bots drive up prices in the secondary market by creating artificial scarcity when fans try to purchase tickets from the artist or venue.
- **Live theater tax credit.** It launches a new tax credit to support local live theater productions. The credit will help Massachusetts artists working towards Broadway or off-Broadway launch a national tour in the commonwealth.

- **Expanding Nurse Licensure.** This expands nurse licensure and is another attempt at addressing the state’s healthcare worker shortage by entering Massachusetts into the nurse licensure compact (an interstate agreement among 42 jurisdictions allowing registered nurses and licensed practical/vocational nurses to practice in any participating state without needing to obtain individual state licenses).
- **Civil service reforms.** This legislation modernizes Massachusetts civil service laws to give communities more options in filling vacancies while giving qualified job seekers more opportunities to find a match.
- **Data centers tax credit.** It creates a new tax credit to attract investment in qualified data centers.

Local Authorizations for the 3rd Hampshire District

These local authorizations are included in the bond.

- \$1 million to the town of Amherst to make business district sidewalks fully accessible to residential neighborhoods.
- \$1 million to the town of Granby to develop, renovate, or construct the Granby Municipal Building.
- \$1 million to the town of Amherst for the installation of solar canopies on municipal parking lots.
- \$500,000 to the Amherst Council on Aging for the feasibility study, planning and construction of a Council on Aging facility.

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