

H.4529—An Act enabling partnerships for growth

Capital Authorizations: This bill contains a total of \$240 million in capital authorizations across three core areas: housing, community development, and business competitiveness.

Housing (\$85M):

- \$50 million for transit-oriented housing for the production of high-density mixed-income affordable housing near transit nodes;
- \$25 million for neighborhood stabilization to help return blighted or vacant housing back to productive use; and
- \$10 million for sustainable and climate-resilient construction in affordable, multifamily housing developments to better respond to climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Community Development (\$75M):

- \$40 million to support the redevelopment of underutilized, blighted, or abandoned buildings;
- \$15 million to continue making sites ready for development through site assembly and assessment, permitting, and other predevelopment activities;
- \$10 million for a fund dedicated to supporting community development and infrastructure projects in rural communities and small towns;
- \$5 million for planning initiatives undertaken by individual municipalities, joint cities or towns, or entire regions working together to address shared goals related to community development, housing production or other issues of local and regional concern; and
- \$5 million needed for maintenance of broadband infrastructure in central and western Massachusetts.

Business Competitiveness (\$80M):

- \$45 million to support technology and innovation ecosystems and key industry clusters by funding initiatives undertaken by universities and businesses, with a focus on emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, robotics, “bluetech,” and others;
- \$10 million to expand the advanced manufacturing pipeline, building on the successful model of the Massachusetts Manufacturing Innovation Initiative (M2I2) ;
- \$10 million to enable community development financial institutions to reach underserved populations, such as women and minority-owned businesses, and leverage federal funding to support lending for small businesses;
- \$5 million for a matching grant program to provide capital for micro-businesses and low-to-moderate income entrepreneurs looking to start or expand a new business; and
- \$10 million for a matching fund to support capital improvements in tourism assets to attract new visitors and encourage return visits.

Outside Sections:

- HDIP Cap Increase and Eligibility Expansion: Raise the annual HDIP cap from \$10M to \$30M and expand the eligibility to allow certified projects in Gateway-like cities (in addition to just GCs) that are in need of increased housing production to be eligible for the program. Other proposed modifications include allowing carryover of awarded credits and allowing transfer of credits.
- Housing Choice: Enable cities and towns to adopt certain zoning best practices related to housing production by a simple majority vote, rather than the current two-thirds supermajority. The included provisions mirror language reported favorably by the Joint Committee on Housing.
- TDI Equity Program: Amendments will permit MassDevelopment to acquire less than a controlling interest in a project, and to offer grants or loans to advance a project. This flexibility will allow MassDevelopment to use limited funding more effectively and assist more successful developments.
- TDI Fellows: Amendment will allow TDI fellows to work collaboratively with other municipalities on issues of regional significance, instead of focusing only on a TDI district in a gateway city.
- Apprenticeship Tax Credit: Allow EOLWD to name additional eligible occupations for the existing Registered Apprentice Tax Credit (RATC). This change will permit the tax credit program to respond to changing workforce needs and market demands.
- Eviction Records of Minors: Prohibit the naming of a minor as a defendant in an eviction claim and further provides that any such minors' names so included shall be expunged from any court record and electronic docket entry.
- Public Housing Dispositions and Partnerships (Chapter 121B): Series of amendments to create more tools to enable LHAs to address public housing capital needs. These tools will: authorize LHAs to borrow against state capital funding; allow PILOTs for public housing replacement units; authorize LHAs to retain proceeds of land disposition; and streamline the 30B process to allow for more flexible solicitations.
- Modernization of the Urban Renewal Statute (Chapter 121B): Provisions to streamline and update the statute that governs DHCD oversight of municipal urban renewal planning.
- Smart Growth (Chapter 40R): Permit DHCD to establish smart growth design standards; clarify that mixed use development is allowed; place limitations on density bonus payments for housing in districts limited to age-restricted, disabled or assisted living populations; and enhancing DHCD's ability to claw back incentive payments if a community repeals 40R zoning.
- Cleanup and Streamlining: The bill includes a number of provisions related to statutory cleanup and streamlining, including changes related to the Department of Housing and Community Development; Division of Insurance; the Division of Banks; and the Department of Telecommunications and Cable; as well as modifications to reorganize some of the agencies and departments within the Executive Office (e.g. MOTT, MOITI, MMP, MOBD).