

November 7, 2025

Via Electronic Mail

The Hon. Rebecca L. Rausch, Chair
Joint Committee on Municipalities
and Regional Government
State House, Room 215
Boston, MA 02133
Becca.Rausch@masenate.gov

The Hon. Jack Patrick Lewis, Chair
Joint Committee on Municipalities
and Regional Government
State House, Room 448
Boston, MA 02133
Jack.Lewis@mahouse.gov

Re: House 56, An Act Empowering Municipalities and Local Governments

Dear Chair Rausch and Chair Lewis:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before your committee recently regarding House 56, An Act Empowering Municipalities and Local Governments. Through this letter I shall expand upon my testimony and follow up on three questions raised at the hearing to others, for which I believe I have relevant information to share.

As your committee considers House 56, *An Act Empowering Municipalities and Local Governments*, I write to offer my support for sections of the bill that are of particular interest to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG).

As the statewide Inspector General with both state and municipal procurement oversight, a significant portion of my responsibility is focused on procurements conducted by Commonwealth municipalities. As such, I have prioritized understanding the challenges local government officials face in their day-to-day operations by conducting visits to meet these officials in their city and town halls. To date I have visited nearly 90 municipalities. House 56 addresses many of the immediate concerns that these officials have raised by making commonsense updates to the procurement procedures in the Uniform Procurement Act, Chapter 30B of the Massachusetts General Laws (Chapter 30B). These changes will ensure that local governmental bodies have the flexibility to conduct procurements in a fair and transparent environment.

Chapter 30B Price Thresholds

One of the most significant challenges local officials have brought to my attention is that governmental bodies (including municipal governments) and school districts are subject to different procurement price thresholds. While not a high-profile issue, I assure you that there is at least one person in each of the Commonwealth's 351 cities and towns to whom this change would be a game changer, namely the Chief Procurement Officer. Due to a recent change in the law, school districts are permitted to seek three written quotations for procurements up to, but not exceeding, \$100,000, rather than undertaking a competitive sealed bidding process. Meanwhile, municipal governments are subject to a lower threshold of \$50,000. Administering two thresholds within one community is cumbersome and difficult, especially when municipal departments and school departments want to conduct joint procurements.

Sections 10 and 11 and sections 13 through 16 of House 56 equalize the price thresholds for all governmental bodies subject to Chapter 30B. In the interest of equity and fairness, I strongly support these sections of the bill.

In addition, assuming that the threshold changes in sections 10 and 11 of the bill are adopted, section 10 permits governmental bodies to use requests for proposals (RFPs) for procurements under \$100,000. Currently, governmental bodies have the option to use an invitation for bids for procurements below this threshold, in addition to soliciting price quotations. Many municipal officials have asked for the flexibility to use RFPs because they want to apply comparative evaluation criteria in addition to price when procuring supplies and services. Granting governmental bodies another procurement option enhances transparency and accountability in municipal administration.

The procurement processes in Chapter 30B are governed by price thresholds. In the interest of fairness and considering the current economic climate, I urge this committee to increase the price thresholds in Chapter 30B for smaller procurements and dispositions. Currently, governmental bodies may make purchases of \$10,000 or less using sound business practices and may dispose of surplus supplies estimated to cost \$10,000 or less using written procedures. Chapter 30B also requires all contracts of \$10,000 or more to be in writing. The OIG proposes raising each of these figures to \$25,000. I have enclosed a redline of these additional threshold changes for your review. (Appendix A)

To summarize, the new thresholds would be:

Procurement procedure	Current	Recommended change
Sound business practices	Under \$10,000	Under \$25,000
Written price quotations	\$10,000 to \$50,000 ¹	\$25,000 to \$100,000
Sealed bids or sealed proposals	Over \$50,000 ²	Over \$100,000

The OIG filed much of the same language relating to thresholds in House 12, *An Act Updating Chapter 30B*, currently before the Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

Cooperative Purchases

Additionally, I am supportive of language relating to cooperative purchasing included in the bill. One change would allow services to be procured using cooperative purchasing. Supplies can already be procured that way. Another change allows the jurisdiction to grant an award to multiple offerors using cooperative purchasing. I believe these changes will further assist our municipalities.

Snow Hauling and Snow Removal

In meetings with municipalities, local officials have identified the procurement of snow plowing, hauling, and removal services as a challenging area. Although snow plowing is already

¹ The price quotation threshold for municipal and regional school districts is \$100,000.

² Municipal and regional school districts must use sealed bids or sealed proposals for procurements over \$100,000.

exempt from the competitive procurement requirements of Chapter 30B, private contractors often find it more attractive to contract for snow plowing if the contract includes snow hauling and snow removal. When municipalities are unable to contract for these services together, they may lose contractors to private customers.

The OIG seeks to balance transparency and fairness in procurement while also considering the challenges municipalities face in obtaining certain services. Therefore, I support granting municipalities the added flexibility of obtaining all three snow-related services in the same manner. Section 6 of House 56 adds snow hauling and snow removal to Chapter 30B's current exemption for snow plowing.

I also note that the OIG filed the same language in House 13, *An Act Relative to Snow Hauling and Removal*, currently before the Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

Chapter 30B Technical Corrections

House 56 includes technical corrections identified by the OIG which are needed in Chapter 30B. The bill corrects statutory references rendered inaccurate by amendments to other statutes. I greatly appreciate the Healey-Driscoll Administration for including these technical corrections in the bill, as it is imperative that the statute is free from inaccurate or out-of-date references.

The OIG has identified additional technical changes that I hope this committee will include in its version of the bill. Among these changes is a correction to the reference of the Open Meeting Law codified in Chapter 30A. Two other corrections reflect the enactment of Chapter 7C related to capital asset management and maintenance, a topic previously covered by Chapter 7. I have enclosed a redline of additional technical changes for your review. (Appendix B)

Hearing Follow-up

I would also like to follow up on three questions which were asked at the hearing on House 56.

The first relates to hybrid meetings. The question was asked whether there were communities which do not have the capabilities to hold hybrid meetings. There are a number of municipalities which I visited that I do not believe have the resources – equipment or staff – to adequately allow for the use of a hybrid meeting model. This does not mean that the proposal should not advance, but know that even post the pandemic, all 351 communities of the Commonwealth are not able to meet this baseline.

The second relates to cybersecurity for municipalities. The Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MassTech), through its MassCyberCenter, provides a variety of cybersecurity resources for municipalities. In fact, the FY26 budget dedicates \$1.5M for MassTech to work with public higher education institutions to provide cyber security services to groups including municipalities. I have been to one of these regional security operations centers and they are quite impressive. I recommend that any municipalities in need of cybersecurity assistance contact the MassCyberCenter. It can provide information on cybersecurity resources and grants already available to municipalities.

The third relates to the requirement to post procurements on COMMBUYS, which has only been in place since 2016. The law currently requires two other means of public posting. While some jurisdictions may find it helpful to post on COMMBUYS, I do not believe it is necessary to require this in all cases. I think there may be small communities with limited resources that have difficulty fulfilling this requirement.

Conclusion

I hope you will look favorably upon these reasonable and important updates to the Uniform Procurement Act. I am confident that these updates will have a positive impact on the operations of all 351 municipalities across the Commonwealth, including those that you represent.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 617-722-8806 or Jeffrey.S.Shapiro@mass.gov, or Joshua Giles, Director of Government Outreach and Public Policy, at 617-719-8225 or Joshua.Giles@mass.gov.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey S. Shapiro, Esq., CIG
Inspector General

Enclosure

Appendix A. Chapter 30B additional price threshold increases redline
Appendix B. Chapter 30B technical corrections redline

cc (by email):

The Hon. John F. Keenan, Vice Chair, Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government
The Hon. Lindsay N. Sabadosa, Vice Chair, Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government
The Hon. Peter J. Durant, Ranking Minority Member, Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government
The Hon. Michael S. Chaisson, Ranking Minority Member, Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government
Joshua Giles, Director of Government Outreach and Public Policy, OIG
Nataliya Urciuoli, Senior Executive Assistant, OIG