



An Act Relative to Massachusetts Winning Global Investment, Talent, and Innovation

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Bill Summary

An Act Relative to Massachusetts Winning Global Investment, Talent, and Innovation

The Healey-Driscoll Administration is proud to file *An Act Relative to Massachusetts Winning Global Investment, Talent, and Innovation* (“Mass Wins”). The Mass Leads Act (2024) marked a significant step forward for Massachusetts, doubling down on the life sciences industry and investing in key sectors such as climatetech, advanced manufacturing, and robotics, while modernizing core business incentive programs and reauthorizing critical community investments like MassWorks. Since then, the economic landscape has shifted, and sustaining Massachusetts’ competitive position requires continued investment and bold action.

At a time of ongoing economic uncertainty and global disruption, states cannot rely on federal leadership alone to drive growth and opportunity. Massachusetts must act strategically, with targeted investments and reforms, to build on its strengths and remain a leading destination for innovation, talent, and long-term prosperity.

The Healey-Driscoll Administration’s 2026 economic development bill builds on the Mass Leads Act by leaning in on the Commonwealth’s compete-to-win objectives. The bill is organized around five key pillars:

- **GlobalMass:** Elevating Massachusetts as a Global Economy
- **A More Affordable Massachusetts:** Lowering Costs for Residents and Businesses
- **Attracting and Retaining Talent:** Supporting the Commonwealth’s Workforce
- **A More Competitive Massachusetts:** Strategic Measures to Strengthen Economic Competitiveness
- **OneMA:** Advancing Targeted Reforms to Support Statewide Equity and Opportunity

Taken together, these pillars aim to lower costs, attract global investment, and strengthen Massachusetts’ competitiveness for businesses and workers. Mass Wins includes **\$305 million** in **capital authorizations**, offset by approximately \$254 million in deauthorizations. The bill contains more than **120 outside section provisions**.

GlobalMass: Elevating Massachusetts as a Global Economy

On a global stage, Massachusetts would rank as the 22nd largest economy in the world — ahead of such advanced economies as Norway, Sweden, and Ireland. Measured by GDP per capita, Massachusetts ranks 4th among all economies in the world.

GlobalMass is a statewide economic development strategy to position Massachusetts as the leading U.S. destination for global investment, innovation, and talent. Its goal is to leverage the Commonwealth's core strengths to build its global competitive advantage. Particularly at a time when the U.S. is becoming less welcoming to partners around the world, Massachusetts is positioning itself as a welcoming destination for global partners and investment. This bill includes two key components to enable the execution of the strategy:

- **GlobalMass Innovation Access Fund:** Directs the Pension Reserves Investment Management (PRIM) Board to make a seed investment of at least \$50 million in a professionally managed fund-of-funds focused on Massachusetts innovation. The GlobalMass Innovation Access Fund will welcome international capital to support innovation and growth in Massachusetts-based companies.
- **GlobalMass (\$20 million):** Provides capital funding to invest in sites designed to attract international companies to Massachusetts, strengthening the Commonwealth's position as a destination for global business.

A More Affordable Massachusetts: Lowering Costs for Residents and Businesses

The bill includes several provisions that will lower costs for businesses:

- **Expands Eligibility for the Small Business Energy Tax Exemption:** Updates eligibility thresholds for the first time since 2006, increasing the employee threshold from five to ten and the gross income threshold from \$1 million to \$2 million. Approximately 20,000 additional micro- and small businesses are expected to qualify under the updated thresholds.
- **Reduces LLC Filing Fees:** Lowers the initial filing fee to form most limited liability companies from \$500 to \$100, reducing barriers for new business formation and bringing Massachusetts into closer alignment with peer states. The bill also introduces a graduated fee structure over the first five years of operation, further supporting business growth across the Commonwealth. The lowered fees will not apply to LLCs established to hold title to real estate or LLCs that own more than \$1 million in assets.
- **Economic Development Utility Rates:** Authorizes utility companies to offer discounted electricity rates to large companies relocating to Massachusetts, provided that the Department of Public Utilities determines that the discounted rates will not increase costs for other ratepayers. This initiative makes Massachusetts more competitive in attracting energy-intensive employers and major economic development projects.
- **Board of Building Regulations and Standards (BBRS) Appeals:** Clarifies that the existing BBRS appeals process applies to both the specialized energy code and the municipal stretch opt-in

energy code, ensuring developers and builders have a consistent and accessible path to resolve disputes. This addresses an ambiguity in current law that has created uncertainty for construction projects.

The bill also includes targeted reforms to lower costs for residents by accelerating housing production and reducing development barriers:

- **Codify Rules for Local Site Plan Review:** Establishes clear, consistent procedures and standards for site plan review, a local permitting process that is currently applied unevenly across municipalities and creates costly uncertainty in development. This change will create a more predictable and fair process for housing, commercial, and industrial projects statewide.
- **Commercial Conversions:** Enables municipalities to adopt commercial conversion practices to transform underutilized commercial space into housing or mixed-use development. Eligible projects would benefit from streamlined permitting, parking requirement waivers, property tax incentives, and priority access to the commercial conversion tax credit and Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit.
- **Mayoral Zoning Proposals:** Allows mayors to formally initiate zoning change proposals, closing a gap in current law that does not explicitly authorize them to do so. This modest but practical change will help cities bring forward zoning reforms more quickly and efficiently. Residents and elected bodies retain their existing roles in the review and approval process.

Attracting and Retaining Talent: Supporting the Commonwealth's Workforce

The bill includes policies tailored to strengthen Massachusetts' talent pipeline and improve retention of early-career workers:

- **Targeted Reform to Noncompete Law:** Addresses a commonly used loophole that allows an employer to avoid paying fair compensation when enforcing a noncompete agreement. This update ensures that if an employer is paying "other mutually agreed upon consideration," that consideration is at least equivalent in value to the garden leave payments that would otherwise be required.
- **Internship Tax Credit:** Accelerates implementation of the Mass Leads-established internship tax credit, a \$10 million annual pilot program that incentivizes employers to expand internship opportunities for students from Massachusetts colleges and universities.
- **English Proficiency Waivers for Nurses:** Requires the state Board of Registration in Nursing to waive redundant English proficiency testing for nurses who have already demonstrated proficiency through practice in English-speaking jurisdictions. This builds on Mass Leads reforms to expand the healthcare delivery workforce and reduces unnecessary barriers for qualified internationally trained professionals.

A More Competitive Massachusetts: Strategic Measures to Strengthen Economic Competitiveness

The bill advances key investments and policies to strengthen Massachusetts' competitiveness by supporting innovation, business growth, and emerging technologies:

- **Defense Sector Innovation (\$100 million):** Building on the SHIELD initiative, this investment supports capital projects to strengthen Massachusetts' defense innovation sector, including key facilities, research, and supply chain infrastructure across critical technologies.
- **Applied AI & Quantum (\$75 million):** As momentum grows around the Massachusetts AI Hub and the state's broader AI ecosystem, this investment ensures Massachusetts remains well-equipped to support the application of artificial intelligence across key sectors. Funding will enable investment in AI-driven tools, infrastructure, and applications, as well as emerging technologies like quantum computing, with the goal of positioning Massachusetts as a national leader in this space.
- **Robotics (\$25 million):** Massachusetts is home to one of the world's leading robotics clusters. This provision reauthorizes the Mass Leads Act investment to provide additional runway for MassTech's robotics initiative, supporting research and development and accelerating the transition of innovations from the lab to real-world applications.
- **Business Expansion Capital (\$25 million):** Supports the expansion of this capital program, which provides grants and financial assistance to businesses constructing or expanding commercial, industrial, and manufacturing facilities in Massachusetts, driving job creation and economic growth statewide. This initiative is a key program offered through the state's Business Front Door.
- **Agtech & Food Science (\$10 million):** Positions Massachusetts to strengthen its leadership in food innovation and agricultural technology. The program will provide targeted capital grants to advance food science, build resilient and sustainable food systems, and catalyze agtech enterprises.
- **Grid Innovation:** Establishes a board within MassCEC to identify and advance solutions to barriers facing electric grid innovation and deployment. The proposal also enables the Department of Public Utilities to issue expedited approvals of related utility filings, reducing delays that can stall promising climatetech technologies. This approach helps ensure Massachusetts remains a leader in the growing climatetech sector while accelerating adoption of technologies that support grid capacity and reliability.

OneMA: Advancing Targeted Reforms to Support Statewide Equity and Opportunity

The bill includes targeted investments and reforms to expand opportunity, reduce barriers, and ensure more equitable access to economic growth across the Commonwealth:

- **Downtowns Initiative (\$25 million):** Provides capital funding to help cities and towns revitalize downtowns and community centers, supporting infrastructure improvements, public spaces, and placemaking efforts that attract residents, businesses, and jobs. This

investment strengthens local economies and expands access to opportunity across regions, delivered through the Community One Stop for Growth.

- **Creative Economy Capital Program (\$25 million):** Capital grants to enhance arts, culture, and the creative economy across Massachusetts. Eligible investments include public realm and streetscape improvements that strengthen downtown vibrancy, rehabilitation of historic districts, wayfinding and signage to support cultural institutions, upgrades to public gathering and performance spaces, and permanent public art installations. The program is designed to strengthen community-based creative assets and the infrastructure that supports them.
- **Devens Zoning Amendment Process Modifications:** Streamlines the zoning amendment process in the Devens Regional Enterprise Zone by replacing the current “super town meeting” structure with a single meeting held at Devens, while maintaining democratic participation from all three neighboring communities.
- **Municipal Payment for Make-Ready Work:** Allows municipalities to pay estimated costs for make-ready work (utility poles, conduits, ducts, or rights-of-way) related to broadband infrastructure projects prior to project completion. This change aligns with standard industry practices and reduces delays in local projects that require utility infrastructure upgrades.
- **Streamlining Licensure for Engineers as Home Inspectors:** Allows licensed engineers to qualify for home inspector licensure with reduced exam and supervised inspection requirements, recognizing their existing technical expertise and helping meet increased demand for home inspections.
- **Cultural Facilities Fund:** Expands eligibility for the Cultural Facilities Fund to allow more municipal facilities to benefit. This change aligns the program with its original intent to support cultural facilities across the Commonwealth.
- **EDIP, MLSC, and MassCEC Tax Credit Uniformity:** Aligns job creation tax credit programs across agencies to improve consistency, flexibility, and effectiveness. Updates include more frequent award cycles, multi-year incentive agreements, and proportional credit recapture for non-compliance.
- **Capital Deauthorizations:** Deauthorizes \$254.4 million in existing capital authorizations to ensure that the bill’s new authorizations and reauthorizations are fiscally responsible.

The bill also includes several technical amendments and statutory updates to align existing laws with current practice and address implementation issues. These changes are not captured in the above summary.