

March 27, 2026

Via Electronic Mail

The Hon. Aaron M. Michlewitz, Chair
House Committee on Ways and Means
State House, Room 243
Boston, MA 02133
Aaron.M.Michlewitz@mahouse.gov

Re: House 5131, An Act Empowering Municipalities and Local Governments

Dear Chair Michlewitz:

As your committee considers House 5131, *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 more than 100 municipalities. House 5131 addresses many of the immediate concerns that these officials have raised by making common sense 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 will have flexibility while conducting 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.

House 5131 equalizes 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.

Moreover, in the interest of fairness and considering the current economic climate, I strongly support the bill's increase for 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. Raising each of these figures to \$25,000 is a practical change needed for modern procurements.¹

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 ²	\$25,000 to \$100,000
Sealed bids or sealed proposals	Over \$50,000 ³	Over \$100,000

The OIG filed much of the same language relating to thresholds in House 12, *An Act Updating Chapter 30B*, currently before your committee.

Use of RFPs for Procurements Under \$100,000

In addition, assuming that the threshold changes in sections 16 and 17 of the bill are adopted, section 16 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 process 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.

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 – The 2025-2026 Winter Demonstrated Why This Matters

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 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.

¹ A technical change is needed in section 16 of House 5131 to account for all references to the sound business practices threshold. The enclosed redline incorporates the correction in section 4 of Chapter 30B. This correction is needed to eliminate confusion.

² The price quotation threshold for municipal and regional school districts is \$100,000.

³ Municipal and regional school districts must use sealed bids or sealed proposals for procurements over \$100,000.

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 13 of House 5131 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 your committee.

Chapter 30B Technical Corrections

House 5131 includes technical corrections which are needed in Chapter 30B. The bill corrects statutory references rendered inaccurate by amendments to other statutes. It is imperative that the statute is accurate, so that it is easy to follow and administer by the procurement officials who are required to follow this law.

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. Section 4 of Chapter 30B technical amendment redline

cc (by email):

The Hon. Kip A. Diggs, Assistant Vice Chair, House Ways and Means Committee
The Hon. Todd M. Smola, Ranking Minority Member, House Ways and Means Committee
Molly Conneely, General Counsel, House Ways and Means Committee
Joshua Giles, Director of Government Outreach and Public Policy, OIG
Nataliya Urciuoli, Senior Executive Assistant, OIG