



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HOUSING & LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Maura T. Healey, Governor ♦ Kimberley Driscoll, Lieutenant Governor ♦ Edward M. Augustus Jr., Secretary

PHN 2024-24

To: Local Housing Authority (LHA) Executive Directors
From: Ben Stone, Undersecretary for Public Housing & Rental Assistance
Date: December 11, 2024
RE: Recent Legislation: Easier Internet Installation for LHAs

Governor Healey recently signed two important pieces of legislation. This notice summarizes these laws and highlights measures applicable to LHAs. **Most useful to LHAs, public agencies can now procure the installation of internet services under 30B.**

[AN ACT RELATIVE TO STRENGTHENING MASSACHUSETTS' ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP](#)

- Chapter 238 of the Acts of 2024

[AN ACT PROMOTING A CLEAN ENERGY GRID, ADVANCING EQUITY AND PROTECTING RATEPAYERS](#)

- Chapter 239 of the Acts of 2024

The [Economic Development Bill](#) includes authorizations for a range of economic development grant programs such as MassWorks, new capital resources for climate tech, and various policy initiatives. Of note for housing:

- Several sections authorize a “permit regulatory office” to coordinate priority development sites, including housing.
- Section 283 allows (**but does not require**) public agencies or municipalities to require use of project labor agreements (PLAs) on public works constructions, following a determination that a PLA is in the best interest of the public agency.
- Section 102 provides important procurement flexibility for public agencies – including LHAs – seeking to install Wi-Fi or broadband services. Reproduced below, this ensures that LHAs can procure installation and operating support for internet services **through ONE contract under 30B**. This avoids the current process that requires THREE contracts (c.7C design, c.149 construction, c.30B maintenance and service). This will support the deployment of [Apartment Wi-Fi](#) or other low-cost internet services for public housing residents.

SECTION 102. Section 1 of chapter 30B of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by adding the following subsection:-

(g) Notwithstanding section 39M of chapter 30, or any general or special law to

the contrary, a governmental body may, in a single procurement in accordance with section 5, procure: (i) broadband internet service; (ii) the design, installation, maintenance and operation of fiber optic cables and other equipment to provide broadband internet service to a public building or buildings; (iii) the design, installation, maintenance and operation of a wireless communication network for a public building or public land; or (iv) any combination of the foregoing. All such fiber optic cables, wireless network equipment and other physical improvements designed, installed, maintained and operated pursuant to such procurement shall be considered supplies.

The [clean energy permitting law](#) makes several reforms to accelerate deployment of renewable energy in the Commonwealth. Reforms include streamlining public engagement with the permitting processes for renewable energy projects, adjustments to Historic District rules around siting renewable energy systems, and other changes which will make it easier for LHAs to deploy renewable energy in the future. Specifically, the law:

- Condenses the dozens of state, regional, and local permits into one large permit;
- Assigns Large projects (>25 MW) for review by a state Energy Facilities Siting Board; and
- Sets deadlines for action on permits: 12-15 months, depending on project size.

The law also enables faster deployment of public electric vehicle chargers and makes it harder for natural gas utilities to connect new customers to their networks.