



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
General Court
State House, Boston, MA 02133

November 20, 2023

Chair Michael J. Rodrigues
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
State House, Room 212
Boston, MA 02133

Chair Aaron Michlewitz
House Committee on Ways and Means
State House, Room 243
Boston, MA 02138

Senator Cindy F. Friedman
State House, Room 313
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Ann-Margaret Ferrante
State House, Room 238
Boston, MA 02133

Senator Patrick M. O'Connor
State House, Room 419
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Todd M. Smola
State House, Room 124
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chair Michlewitz, Representative Ferrante, Representative Smola, Chair Rodrigues, Senator Friedman, and Senator O'Connor:

We write to express our strong support for the expeditious release of funds from the close-out supplemental spending bills for FY2023, Senate Bill 2505, and the corresponding House Bill 4171 - **An Act Supplementing Certain Existing Appropriations And For Certain Other Activities And Projects**. Where there is mutual agreement, conferees can release items from the bills - in part, to fund essential services and vital accounts, and we hope this can be done as soon as practicable.

Some of the important items included in the bills that need immediate funding include:

- **Disaster relief:** \$15 million in additional disaster relief for affected municipalities. This funding is critical to help communities rebuild and recover from recent natural disasters, such as floods, fires, and other emergencies.
- **State employee labor contracts:** Funding to cover the costs of recently negotiated state employee labor contracts. This funding is essential to ensure that state employees are fairly compensated for their work.
- **Opioid settlement fund updates:** Increased clarity on how opioid settlement funds can be spent and accounted for. This will help ensure that these funds are used effectively to address the opioid crisis.
- **Spending for education, healthcare, environmental protection, and public safety:** Funding for a variety of other important programs and services, including:

- Education: Funding for schools and colleges to help provide quality education to our students,
- Healthcare: Funding for hospitals and clinics to provide essential healthcare services to our residents,
- **Environmental protection:** Funding for programs to protect our environment and address climate change.
- **Municipal finance law changes:** Several important changes to municipal finance law, including:
 - Increased flexibility for municipalities to use their own revenue to fund local projects,
 - Streamlined processes for obtaining state funding,
 - Enhanced oversight of municipal finances.

With an understanding that legislative formal sessions for the calendar year have ended, and that the \$2.81 billion supplemental bills are now subject to conference, we believe that it is critical for the Legislature to take action to release funds.

We believe that these items are all essential to the well-being of our Commonwealth. We urge you, the conferees, to take swift action to release the funds so that these important functions can continue to operate effectively.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Walter F. Timilty
State Senator
Norfolk, Plymouth and
Bristol District

Paul R. Feeney
State Senator
Bristol and Norfolk District

David F. DeCoste
State Representative
5th Plymouth District

Christopher M. Markey
State Representative
9th Bristol District

Kimberly N. Ferguson
State Representative
1st Worcester District

Brian M. Ashe
State Representative
2nd Hampden District

Michael D. Brady
State Senator
Second Plymouth and
Norfolk District

Hannah Kane
State Representative
11th Worcester District

David T. Vieira
State Representative
3rd Barnstable District

Susannah M. Whipps
State Representative
2nd Franklin District

Rebecca L. Rausch
State Senator
Norfolk, Worcester and
Middlesex District

Michael O. Moore
State Senator
Second Worcester District

John F. Keenan
State Senator
Norfolk and Plymouth
District

Steven S. Howitt
State Representative
4th Bristol District

Edward J. Kennedy
State Senator
First Middlesex District

Brian W. Murray
State Representative
10th Worcester District

Marc R. Pacheco
State Senator
Third Bristol and Plymouth
District

Bruce E. Tarr
State Senator
First Essex and Middlesex
District

Jonathan D. Zlotnik
State Representative
2nd Worcester District

Colleen M. Garry
State Representative
36th Middlesex District

Adam Gomez
State Senator
Hampden District

Joseph D. McKenna
State Representative
18th Worcester District

Bradley H. Jones, Jr.
State Representative
20th Middlesex District

F. Jay Barrows
State Representative
1st Bristol District

Natalie M. Higgins
State Representative
4th Worcester District

Carol A. Doherty
State Representative
3rd Bristol District

Margaret R. Scarsdale
State Representative
1st Middlesex District