

Fall 2022 Legislative Update: Unfinished Business

While formal business at the Massachusetts state legislature ended on July 31st, several outstanding policy issues important to the Chamber still await action. Both the House and Senate signaled a willingness to pass legislation during informal sessions, and the Chamber policy team continues to track bills and engage with elected officials and staff to ensure our members' policy priorities remain part of those ongoing conversations. Below are a few pieces of legislation under consideration by the legislature this fall.

Economic Development and Tax Relief Legislation

By far the largest outstanding bill still pending before the legislature is a major \$4 billion economic development initiative that included a substantial tax reform package and significant investments in housing, the environment, economic development and recovery, and other areas prioritized by the Chamber. This legislation received unanimous approval in both branches, but a conference committee appointed to resolve differences between the House and Senate bills failed to agree to a final compromise prior to July 31st. Several key legislators expressed their intention to move a version of the bill forward during informal sessions, but it remains to be seen how much of the original bill will survive.

The economic development bill contained several major priorities of the Chamber, including tax relief for renters, families, low-income earners, and seniors, as well as reforming our archaic estate tax structure. However, the bill also contained numerous smaller, but still important, policy changes that impact the business community, such as extending and reforming the brownfields tax credit, encouraging municipalities to adopt starter home zoning, and critical funding for electric vehicle infrastructure. We continue to advocate for the bill to remain intact with these important provisions.

Mobility Pricing Commission

The state legislature adopted a Chamber sponsored special commission to research and study mobility pricing in Commonwealth as part of its transportation financing law passed in July. However, Governor Baker returned the provision with an amendment changing its membership, and the resulting bill awaits action by both the House and Senate.

Boston MBTA Board Seat

As part of the FY23 budget debate, the House and Senate adopted a provision awarding the City of Boston a seat on the MBTA Board. The Chamber strongly supported this addition given the importance of public transit to Boston's economic well-being. However, Governor Baker returned the provision with an amendment altering the appointment process to the Board. While the House adopted the amendment, the resulting bill awaits action by the Senate.

Please contact the Chamber's policy team with any questions or to discuss our ongoing advocacy efforts.