

MEMORANDUM

To: All Members of AIA MA
From: John Nunnari
Date: 12/09/25
Re: Legislative and Regulatory Update

Legislative Update:**Since the last Update**

Over the past month, Massachusetts politics were dominated by tensions over affordability, clean-energy policy, and cannabis regulatory reform. Lawmakers sparred over competing House–Senate approaches to emissions targets and ratepayer impacts, while advocates warned that relaxing 2030 climate mandates would undermine long-term environmental goals. At the same time, both branches advanced major changes to the Cannabis Control Commission, including restructuring its leadership and doubling the legal possession limit, amid ongoing turmoil within the agency. As Thanksgiving approached, legislators approved a \$2.3 billion closeout budget that stabilized fiscal year 2025 accounts, including more than \$1.6 billion directed to MassHealth to address soaring health-care costs. The same week saw renewed focus on immigration issues, including hearings on reforming 287(g) agreements and expanding legal defense support for immigrants, while polls showed broad public backing for rent control and other potential 2026 ballot initiatives.

By late November and early December, attention increasingly shifted to the 2026 ballot landscape. Campaigns submitted tens of thousands of signatures on proposals addressing rent control, single-party versus all-party primaries, public records reform, tax changes, and conservation-related sales tax adjustments, forcing lawmakers to weigh whether to legislate proactively or allow questions to proceed to voters. Simultaneously, Boston’s proposal to revise property-tax rules reignited old debates over Proposition 2½, drawing sharp criticism from legislative leaders and real-estate groups. The state also confronted new policy friction points—including graduation testing reforms, SNAP-related federal disputes, and newborn vaccine guidance—while tax collections remained relatively stable heading into the new year. With formal sessions concluding, Beacon Hill entered the holiday season facing both unfinished 2025 business and mounting 2026 political pressures, as lawmakers prepared for a year shaped as much by the ballot as by the legislature itself.

Looking Forward

Rising estimates of Boston property tax increases have revived debate over how much the state should intervene in the balance between residential and commercial tax burdens, with Mayor Michelle Wu again seeking temporary relief for homeowners through a shift onto commercial payers—an approach repeatedly rejected or stalled by the Senate, which has not advanced the city’s home rule petition to committee despite another opportunity to do so. As holiday-season recess slows Beacon Hill’s overall pace, lawmakers have also delayed action on reconciling competing cannabis reform bills, even as regulators continue to consider long-envisioned on-site consumption rules nearly a decade after legalization. The week ahead still features several notable state activities, including meetings of transportation officials, a business address by the state treasurer, reviews of a proposed \$54 million cancer-care expansion, commission sessions on emerging drug and behavioral health challenges, and a Board of Higher Education hearing on a regulatory change that could enable three-year bachelor’s degrees.

AIA MA Bill Tracking

To view the current status of all AIA MA tracked legislation, [please click here](#) (Files located under the banner *Bills Tracked for the 2025–2026 Legislative Session*)

A schedule of all Legislative Events can be found on the [Legislative Events](#) of AIA MA's website.

To review previous Legislative or Regulatory Reports or minutes from GAC meetings, please click [here](#)

Regulatory Update:

A schedule of all construction board regulatory meetings can be found on the [Regulatory Events Calendar](#) of AIA MA's website.

Notices of Public Review of Prospective Regulations (11/10/25 – 12/09/25)

There have been no **Notices of Public Review of Prospective Regulations** since the last Legislative and Regulatory Update dated 10/08/2025

New Regulations (11/10/25 – 12/09/2025)

There have been no **New Regulations** since the last Legislative and Regulatory Update dated 10/08/2025

CMR's tracked include: 105 CMR – State Sanitary Code; 225 CMR 22.00 – 26.00 – Energy Codes; 248 CMR – Plumbing/Gas Fitting Code; 257 CMR – Water Treatment; 271 CMR – Sheet Metal; 310 CMR – DEP; 314 CMR – Water Pollution Control; 521 CMR – Architectural Access; 522 CMR – Boiler Rules; 524 CMR – Elevator; 527 CMR – Fire Code; 528 CMR – Pipefitter and Refrigeration; 780 CMR – Building Code

Copies of all codes listed above can be found on the [State Boards and Construction Regulations](#) page of AIA MA's website

Board of Building Regulation and Standards

Notes pertain only to the first two agenda items. At its December 9th meeting, the BBRS approved multiple sets of meeting minutes—including those of the BBRS, BOC, FPF, and Residential Subcommittee—without objection, concluding all outstanding housekeeping items from fall 2025. The Board then received an extensive presentation from Board Counsel summarizing the statutory framework that governs BBRS authority and responsibilities, including Chapter 143 provisions establishing the Board, outlining its regulatory powers, defining inspector qualifications, clarifying municipal versus state enforcement roles, and detailing public-hearing and regulatory-promulgation requirements under Chapter 30A. The briefing also reviewed statutes related to the Building Code Appeals Board, local option code amendments, and key cross-references to DOL, DFS, and ethics statutes, providing members with a comprehensive refresher on the legal structure underpinning the building code and BBRS operations.

MA Board of Registration of Architects (MBRA)

The December 9th meeting focused on welcoming the new Executive Director, James Curley, new Board Counsel, Stephen Pleva, reviewing plans for NCARB's 2026 regional and annual meetings, and discussing the federal Department of Education's recent decision to exclude architecture from its list of recognized professional degrees—an action AIA is actively contesting due to its significant impact on graduate-level borrowing limits and the profession's talent pipeline. The Board also approved one reinstatement and one reciprocity application, set its 2026 meeting calendar (including two potential in-person meetings), and received a licensing update showing 523 licenses

issued year-to-date. Additional items included discussion of future regulatory review work, updates to pathways-to-practice guidance, and anticipated follow-up on issues raised in the NCARB Model Law comparison.

Board of Fire Prevention Regulations (BFPR)

Although a meeting had been planned for December 4, 2025, it did not take place, and the 2026 meeting schedule has not yet been released.

Board of Elevator Regulation

The next meeting of the board is December 16, 2025.

Massachusetts Sheet Metal Board

The next meeting of the board is December 17, 2025.

Bureau of Pipefitters, Refrigeration Technicians, and Sprinkler Fitters

The next meeting of the board has not yet been released.

Board of State Examiners of Plumbers and Gas Fitters

The next meeting of the board is December 17, 2025.

MAAB

The next meeting of the board is December 15, 2025.

- END -