



Testimony in Support of An Act Relative to GreenWorks (H.3997)

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to the

Senate Committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets

February 25, 2020

Chairman Moore, Vice-Chairman Collins, and distinguished members of the Committee, on behalf of our member organizations, I am testifying in support of and with a proposal to amend H.3997, An Act Relative to GreenWorks, the House-passed legislation providing for a program of climate change resiliency for cities and towns in the Commonwealth. We commend Speaker DeLeo, Representative Golden, and Senator Barrett for developing and shepherding important environmental policy bills through their respective chambers.

MACDC, as a member of the ***Housing and Environment Revenue Opportunities (HERO) Coalition*** ([www.mahousingclimate.org](http://www.mahousingclimate.org)), supports a proposal for doubling the current statewide deeds excise fee, and dedicating 50 percent of the new revenue toward climate resiliency efforts outlined by the Governor and Greenworks and 50 percent for affordable-housing production and preservation. We all understand that high-quality affordable housing is a key component of climate resiliency.

Earlier this Session, MACDC recommended a similar amendment to Governor Baker's proposal (S.10) to fund community-based initiatives to facilitate climate change adaptation through the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program and the MA Climate Clearinghouse. Both efforts support municipalities in planning and preparing community-based solutions that add resiliency and safeguard residents and local resources and infrastructure from the impacts of climate change.

Our members are increasingly aware of the environmental challenges and opportunities within their communities. Whether they are coastal CDCs like Neighborhood of Affordable Housing in East Boston or inland ones like Hilltown CDC in Western Mass, our members understand that low-income populations are often the most vulnerable to the impacts of sea-level rise, extreme heat, severe weather, and other climate change impacts. CDCs are working both to build resiliency in their properties and their communities and to prepare to support disaster-response efforts in advance of any contingency or crisis.

CT	\$10.52	\$4,208	
<i>MA Proposal</i>	<i>\$9.12 (double)</i>	<i>\$3,648</i>	
RI	\$4.60	\$1,840	All paid by seller

The need for new housing revenue is clear. Compared to the 40 percent dedicated to health care, only one percent of the state’s operating budget goes towards housing, even though poor housing quality is one of the key social factors undermining good health.

While the legislature did approve a \$1.8 billion affordable housing bond bill in 2018 – for which we are profoundly grateful – the annual bond cap for housing is just \$238 million in FY 2020, far below the level needed to address our housing needs. At this rate, it will take 7.5 years to spend down the full affordable housing bond bill. In fact, while the Governor’s FY 2020 Capital Budget provided long overdue albeit small increases in funding for public housing, it cut funding for private affordable-housing production and preservation. We cannot afford to tread water, never mind go backwards, on our investments in new affordable housing.

Proposed Use of \$300 Million in New Revenue

- **Climate Resiliency:** We have formed a solid alliance with environmental advocates, who support Governor Baker’s climate resiliency initiative and the community-based solutions that can add environmental resiliency, infrastructure improvements, and workforce development opportunities envisioned by GreenWorks (50 percent).
- **Affordable Housing:** We believe the other 50 percent of new revenue should be used for affordable housing programs, and we respectfully recommend that 60 percent of this new funding go toward the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and 40 percent toward the Housing Preservation and Stabilization Trust Fund to augment the funding needs of the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program and to undergird our support for Massachusetts’ extremely low-income households.

MACDC also would support incorporating provisions that allow municipalities to pass local real estate transfer fees (*e.g. H.2552, H.1769/S.773*). This additional tool to raise revenue empowers communities to meet local needs for affordable housing.

Our Coalition stands united. As housing advocates, we recognize the need to protect our communities and our homes from climate change, sea-level rise, and extreme heat. As environmental advocates we recognize that we must protect the people who live in those communities from displacement, excessive rent burdens, and housing instability. And as residents of this Commonwealth, we recognize that the future of our economy, our communities, and our children depends on our willingness to take bold action now.