



To: House/Senate Economic Development Bill Conference Committee Members

From: Joseph Kriesberg, President & CEO and Kristina Kimani, Director of Policy & Civic Engagement

Re: *An act relating to economic growth and relief for the Commonwealth*

July 25, 2022

On behalf of the Board and Members of the Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations (MACDC), we want to thank the leaders of both the House and the Senate for your consistent support of our communities and the people who live in them. Both versions of the Economic Development legislation included support for many of our priorities including, \$400 million to MassWorks, \$50 million for MassDevelopment for underutilized properties, \$10 million for rural development, and \$6.9 million for the Smart Growth Housing Trust Fund, among others. We are incredibly grateful for this support.

We write today to offer our recommendations for how to reconcile the two legislative proposals in a way to yield the best possible results. Please prioritize inclusion of the following in the final legislation:

1) Line Item 1599-6084 – Affordable Housing

MACDC Request: Adopt the Senate appropriations of:

- \$100 million to expand affordable homeownership opportunities.
- \$150 million for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund
- \$150 million for the Workforce Housing Program
- \$3.5 million for the Saving Towards Affordable and Sustainable Homeownership (STASH) Program

NOTE: We encourage the conference committee to adopt language that provides the flexibility to use some of these dollars to support efforts by Mass Housing and Mass Housing Partnership to offer down payment assistance and other financial assistance to first time homebuyers. These agencies are using previously appropriated ARPA dollars to launch an exciting new program that will be able to serve many more households with additional funding. Closing the racial homeownership gap requires both new housing development and financial assistance to first-time and first-generation homebuyers.

2) Line Item 1599-6061 – Housing Rehabilitation and Redevelopment

MACDC Request: Adopt the House appropriation of:

- \$75 million for the Equitable Developers' Financing Program to promote economic development in BIPOC communities and close the racial wealth gap.



3) Line Item 1599-6062 – Small Business Support

MACDC Request: Adopt the House appropriation of:

- \$75 million for small business grants dedicated to reaching underserved markets, specifically minority, women, veteran and immigrant owned businesses.

4) Line Item 1599-6087 – Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations, Mel King Institute for Community Building, & the Massachusetts Food Trust Program

MACDC Request: Adopt the Senate appropriation of:

- \$200,000 to support MACDC and the Mel King Institute in expanding services and trainings in affordable housing financing, small business development and other economic development related topics with a focus on underinvested-in communities.
- \$200,000 to close a gap in operating dollars and level fund the Massachusetts Food Trust Program for FY23, ensuring uninterrupted continuation of the program.

5) Line item 7002-8060 – Massachusetts Food Trust Program Capital Authorization

MACDC Request: Adopt the Senate authorization of:

- \$1 million in capital funds for the MFTP. We also urge the conference committee to increase the authorized amount to \$6 million over five years. Line item 7002-8014 of the 2016 Economic Development Bond Bill (Chapter 219 of the Acts of 2016) authorized \$6 million in funding for the food businesses envisioned by this program. This five-year authorization expired in 2021 and should be restored.

6) HOMES Act – Amending Section 135A. Chapter 239 of the General Laws

MACDC Request: Adopt the Senate language to:

- Protect tenants from being unfairly marked with an eviction record. MACDC members own nearly 20,000 apartments across the state, so we fully understand the impact that evictions have on families, so we strongly recommend adding this legislation to this bill.

Please contact Kristina Kimani at kristinak@macdc.org or 781-603-6716 if you have any questions about our priorities or these programs. Thank you for your consideration.