

## Senate Passes Bill to Expand Boston Convention and Exhibition Center

BOSTON – The Senate on Thursday passed a bill 31-6 to expand the Boston Exhibition and Convention Center, which includes new authorization powers for the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority and outlines regulations in regards to construction, workforce development and bond requirements.

“In comparing the Commonwealth to the rest of the country, our convention centers, facilities and hotel space pale in comparison to what other states can offer,” **Senate President Therese Murray (D-Plymouth)** said. “This expansion will allow more events, both national and international, to come to Massachusetts and help to firmly place ourselves in a cutting-edge world economy.”

“I’m happy that the Senate bill includes the cost-savings, taxpayer protection and transparency measures, and green construction requirements,” said **Senator Brian A. Joyce (D-Milton), Senate Chair of the Senate Committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets.**

The bill authorizes \$1 billion for an approximately 1,300,000 square foot expansion to the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center.

In an effort to increase diversity and workforce training, the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority is authorized to develop a supplier diversity program to maximize participation from minority-owned, service-disabled veteran-owned and women-owned businesses as well as a workforce minority program and construction workforce training program.

The bill requires the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority to meet the requirements of LEED-Silver certification from the United States Green Building Council for new Boston Convention and Exhibition Center buildings and use best efforts to meet the requirements for existing buildings. The Authority must also comply with energy efficiency requirements.

A special obligation bond will be borrowed against the Convention Center Fund (CCF), which consists of tourism-based fees and taxes. 98.5% come from Boston and Cambridge, which are the areas that will directly benefit from this expansion.

The bill also authorizes bonds to be issued for a term of 30 years and to be payable no later than June 30, 2060. The Treasurer will issue up to 10% of the bond authorization to create a debt service reserve fund to increase the marketability of the bonds.

In addition, the bill confirms that the funds from this bond authorization will not be used for the purposes of a hotel subsidy.

The Senate and House will now produce a compromise bill for final passage and consideration of the Governor.