SENATE . . . . . No. 2594

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)

SENATE, September 8, 2025.

The committee on Higher Education to whom was referred the petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 949) of Jacob R. Oliveira, Vanna Howard, Michael D. Brady, James K. Hawkins and other members of the General Court for legislation to create a Green and Healthy Public College and University Building Planning Commission that will make recommendations for public higher education buildings relative to energy efficiency, spatial adequacy, life safety, accessibility, indoor environmental quality and public health, report the accompanying bill (Senate, No. 2594).

For the committee,
Joanne M. Comerford

FILED ON: 8/28/2025

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In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)

An Act to provide green and healthy public colleges and universities.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1. Chapter 15A of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting, after section 47, the following section:-

Section 48. Green and Healthy Public College and University Building Planning Commission

(a) There shall be a Green and Healthy Public College and University Building Planning Commission, which shall consist of the following members: the commissioner of higher education, who shall serve as chair, or a designee; the commissioner of public health, who shall serve as vice chair, or a designee; the secretary of energy and environmental affairs, who shall serve as vice chair, or a designee; the speaker of the house of representatives, or a designee; the president of the senate, or a designee; the minority leader of the house of representatives, or a designee; the minority leader of the senate, or a designee; the chairs of the joint committee on ways and means, or their designees; the chairs of the joint committee on higher education, or their designees; the president of the university of Massachusetts, or a designee; the executive

director of the Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges, or a designee; the executive officer of the Massachusetts State University Council of Presidents, or a designee; 4 representatives of the Massachusetts Teachers Association, 1 of whom shall be employed by the university of Massachusetts, 1 of whom shall be employed by a state university, and 1 of whom shall be employed by a community college; a representative of the American Federation of Teachers, Massachusetts; a representative of the American Institute of Architects-Massachusetts; a representative of the Massachusetts State Building Trades Council; a representative of the Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health; and a representative of the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education's Student Advisory Council established in section 4 of chapter 15A.

(b) The commission shall assess and make recommendations for public higher education buildings relative to energy efficiency, spatial adequacy, life safety, accessibility, indoor environmental quality and public health. The commission shall be established not less than every 10 years to monitor the implementation of its recommendations, and to conduct a new assessment if determined to be necessary by the commission.

(c) The commission shall determine the means of conducting its work, which shall include, but not be limited to:

(1) assessing the extent to which public higher education buildings in the commonwealth provide students a healthy environment that is conducive to learning while efficiently using energy and resources and limiting exposure to toxic building materials, referred to in this section as "green and healthy public higher education buildings." Factors to be considered shall include, but not be limited to: (i) protection against infectious disease; (ii) sufficient ventilation and air

circulation, including adequate outdoor air exchange, filtration and circulation; (iii) healthy indoor air quality, including limits on pollutants, exposure to toxic substances, chemical emissions and vapor intrusion; (iv) adequate availability of clean and safe water; (v) appropriate thermal comfort, humidity and temperature controls; (vi) protections against pests with effective use of integrated pest management; (vii) limits on pollutants, dust, mold and allergens; (viii) appropriate artificial lighting and plentiful natural light; (ix) proper acoustic and noise control; (x) proper maintenance of mechanical systems; (xi) design that promotes physical activity and meets accessibility standards; (xii) opportunities to increase energy efficiency and efficient use of resources including low-flow fixtures; (xiii) opportunities to shift to fossil-free fuels; (xiv) proper access to greenspace; and (xv) opportunities for architectural design to enhance occupant safety. The assessment may rely on existing data or be objectively measured. The assessment shall include a public searchable online dashboard with the findings for all public higher education buildings in the commonwealth; and

(2) developing standards for green and healthy public higher education buildings.

(d) Members of the commission shall not receive compensation for their services but may receive reimbursement for the reasonable expenses incurred in carrying out their responsibilities as members of the commission. The commissioner of higher education shall furnish reasonable staff and other support for the work of the commission.

SECTION 2. Chapter 29 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after section 2DDDDDD the following section:-

Section 2EEEEEE. Green and Healthy Public College and University Building Fund

There shall be a separate fund, to be administered by the board of higher education, which shall be known as the Green and Healthy Public College and University Building Fund. The fund shall be credited with: (i) appropriations, bond proceeds or other money authorized or transferred by the general court and specifically designated to be credited to the fund; (ii) funds from public and private sources, including, but not limited to gifts, grants and donations; and (iii) any interest earned on such funds. Amounts credited to the fund shall be used, without further appropriation, to fund and implement the recommendations of the Green and Healthy Public College and University Building Planning Commission, established in section 48 of chapter 15A, for the renovation and rehabilitation of existing buildings and new building construction to meet the recommended green and healthy public higher education buildings standards.

SECTION 3. The Green and Healthy Public College and University Building Planning Commission, as established in section 48 of chapter 15A of the General Laws, shall create and recommend a plan for all existing and new public higher education buildings to equitably meet, by December 31, 2037, the standards for green and healthy public higher education buildings developed pursuant to paragraph (c) of said section 48 of said chapter 15A. The commission shall issue recommendations, including an analysis that summarizes the findings of its assessment of public higher education buildings in the commonwealth, for implementing green and healthy public higher education buildings standards for cost-effective renovation and rehabilitation of existing buildings and for new building construction, along with a plan to ensure all such buildings meet these standards by December 31, 2037.

The recommendations shall prioritize addressing buildings with the greatest needs first, based in part on recommendations made to the commission by the department of higher education and the University of Massachusetts. The recommendations shall also consider the

environmental conditions of buildings, surrounding communities and resources, site challenges and buildings serving the highest percentage of low income or historically underserved students. The recommendations shall estimate the cost of bringing all buildings into compliance with the standards by December 31, 2037, including the ongoing cost of maintenance and repair, and recommend a plan to fund these costs, and shall also compare those costs with long-term savings in health and medical costs, energy costs, maintenance, life cycle assessment and other savings and the growth in economic activity of bringing buildings to the standards, including increased jobs and job training.

The first plan of the commission shall be published and submitted to the clerks of the senate and house of representatives, the joint committee on ways and means and the joint committee on higher education not later than December 31, 2028. Prior to completing its assessment and issuing its recommendations, the commission shall conduct public hearings at every commonwealth institution of public higher education and shall consult with employee organizations, as defined in chapter 150E, representing employees at each institution of public higher education.