

Massachusetts House of Representatives Bill Summary

Bill #:	H.490
Title:	An Act preparing Massachusetts for the next economy
Sponsor:	Rep. Kristin E. Kassner
Committee:	Economic Development and Emerging Technologies
Hearing Date:	June 5, 2025
Reporting Deadline:	August 4, 2025 (subject to extensions under House Rule 27)
Prior History:	2023-2024 (H.3822): Study Order (See H.4593)
Key Terms:	N/A
Current Law:	N/A
Summary:	<p>This bill establishes a special commission known as the “Massachusetts: NEXT Special Commission”, designed to bring together representatives from government, utilities, businesses, and higher education institutions to develop a strategic plan that strengthens the state’s economy, expands housing, supports emerging technologies, and protects the environment and open spaces.</p> <p>Subsection (a) establishes the special commission “on preparing the built environment for the next economy.” This subsection states that the goal of the special commission will be to “link government, utilities, business, and educational postgraduate institutions in the commonwealth to create a realistic plan to strengthen the economy, provide housing, and opportunities for emerging technologies while protecting our environment and open space.”</p>

Subsection (b) outlines the membership of the special commission, which will include at least 14 members. These include the Secretaries of Housing and Livable Communities and Economic Development (or their designee), two appointees each from the House Speaker and Senate President, one representative each from the Massachusetts Municipal Association and NAIOP, at least two representatives from regional water authorities, and at least two representatives from the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies. The commission must also include at least two institutional partners, including UMass and other universities selected by the Speaker and Senate President. A director, jointly appointed by the two Secretaries, will staff the commission.

Subsection (c) instructs the special commission to collect data regarding the availability of water, wastewater, electricity, transportation access, and proximity to food and medical resources, local land use regulations, the existing built environment, and local limitations within the Commonwealth's economy.

Subsection (d) requires that the special commission must conduct at least one public hearing and allow public testimony.

The second Subsection (d) requires the special commission to submit a final report by June 30, 2026, to the Clerks of the House and Senate, the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means, and the Secretaries of Housing and Livable Communities and Economic Development. The final report must include an inventory of current land use and natural resources, an analysis of housing and business needs, infrastructure capacity, and land use regulations, and recommendations to achieve a balance between economic development, housing expansion, and environmental preservation.