

MEMORANDUM

To: All Members of AIA MA
From: John Nunnari
Date: 07/06/26
Re: Legislative and Regulatory Update

Legislative Update:**Since the last Update**

Since the June Legislative Update, Beacon Hill has entered the final month of formal sessions with conference committee negotiations, the FY`27 budget, the Senate energy bill, and an increasingly active ballot question landscape dominating legislative activity. Following completion of the Senate budget debate, lawmakers quickly turned their attention to reconciling major policy bills while also advancing legislation intended to capitalize on Massachusetts' hosting of FIFA World Cup matches, including measures extending local authority over public consumption zones and later operating hours for restaurants and bars. At the same time, the Senate approved a comprehensive primary care reform package designed to direct a greater share of healthcare spending toward primary care without increasing overall healthcare costs.

During the second half of June, legislative attention increasingly shifted toward conference committee negotiations and a series of significant judicial rulings affecting the November ballot. The Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) removed the proposed income tax reduction initiative from the ballot, concluding that the Attorney General's summary was materially misleading, while lawmakers accelerated negotiations on major bills involving early literacy, higher education infrastructure, data privacy, environmental policy, and the FY`27 budget. Although legislative leaders expressed optimism that the new joint rules would allow more major legislation to be completed before the July 31 formal session deadline, the long-anticipated Senate energy affordability bill remained under development as negotiations continued.

The final weeks of June brought additional changes to the ballot landscape as the SJC upheld the proposed all-party primary initiative but struck the statewide rent control ballot question, leaving nine statewide ballot questions on track for voters this fall. The rulings renewed debate over the Attorney General's ballot certification process while underscoring the growing role of the courts in shaping the November election. Meanwhile, lawmakers continued negotiating the FY`27 budget, with conference committees working to reconcile differences on several high-profile measures before the start of the new fiscal year.

As July began, legislative leaders reached agreement on a \$63.4 billion FY`27 compromise budget and advanced the Senate's energy affordability legislation to conference committee with the House, setting the stage for negotiations on one of the Legislature's highest-profile policy initiatives. Additional conference committee activity continued on data privacy, environmental bond legislation, student cellphone restrictions, and social media protections for minors. With only weeks remaining before the July 31 conclusion of formal sessions, Beacon Hill has entered its traditional end-of-session period, where conference committee negotiations and final legislative compromises are expected to determine which major initiatives reach the Governor's desk before lawmakers recess for the summer.

Looking Forward

As the Legislature returns from the Independence Day recess, attention will increasingly shift from floor debate to conference committee negotiations. Under the Legislature's new joint rules, major

bills need only advance to conference committee by the July 31 deadline in order to remain active through the end of the 2025–2026 legislative session, reducing the pressure for final enactment this month while creating new incentives for both branches to position legislation for continued negotiations later this year. As a result, lawmakers are expected to focus on moving additional proposals into conference rather than resolving every policy difference before formal sessions conclude.

Several high-profile conference committees are already at work, including the Senate and House energy affordability bills, higher education infrastructure borrowing, data privacy, environmental bond legislation, child welfare reform, immigrant protections, and student cellphone restrictions. Additional measures – including campaign finance reforms related to ballot questions, social media protections for minors, economic development legislation, and potential House consideration of the Senate's primary care reform package – could also emerge as priorities during the final weeks of formal sessions. Meanwhile, legislative leaders will closely monitor Gov. Healey's review of the FY '27 budget, with any vetoes or proposed amendments expected to shape the Legislature's July agenda.

Beyond the State House, Massachusetts will continue hosting major international events throughout July. Following the final FIFA World Cup match in Foxborough, attention will turn to Sail Boston 2026, when tall ships from around the world are scheduled to visit Boston Harbor from July 11–16. As formal sessions continue toward the July 31 deadline, Beacon Hill is expected to remain focused on advancing major legislation into conference committee while positioning key policy initiatives for final consideration later this year.

AIA MA Bill Tracking

To view the current status of all AIA MA tracked legislation, [please click here](#) (Files located under the banner *Bills Tracked for the 2025–2026 Legislative Session*)

A schedule of all Legislative Events can be found on the [Legislative Events](#) of AIA MA's website.

To review previous Legislative or Regulatory Reports or minutes from GAC meetings, please click [here](#)

Regulatory Update:

A schedule of all construction board regulatory meetings can be found on the [Regulatory Events Calendar](#) of AIA MA's website.

Notices of Public Review of Prospective Regulations (06/08/26 – 07/06/26)

There have been no **Notices of Public Review of Prospective Regulations** since the last Legislative and Regulatory Update dated 06/10/26

New Regulations (06/08/2026 – 07/06/26)

There have been no **New Regulations** since the last Legislative and Regulatory Update dated 06/10/26

CMR's tracked include: 105 CMR – State Sanitary Code; 225 CMR 22.00 – 26.00 – Energy Codes; 248 CMR – Plumbing/Gas Fitting Code; 257 CMR – Water Treatment; 271 CMR – Sheet Metal; 310 CMR – DEP; 314 CMR – Water Pollution Control; 521 CMR – Architectural Access; 522 CMR – Boiler Rules; 524 CMR – Elevator; 527 CMR – Fire Code; 528 CMR – Pipefitter and Refrigeration; 780 CMR – Building Code

Copies of all codes listed above can be found on the [State Boards and Construction Regulations](#) page of AIA MA's website

Board of Building Regulation and Standards

At its June 9, 2026 meeting, the Board of Building Regulations and Standards (BBRS) approved meeting minutes from the May 12, 2026 BBRS meeting, as well as multiple subcommittee meeting minutes from the Building Official Certification Committee (BOCC), Climate Resiliency Subcommittee, Energy Advisory Committee, Fire Prevention and Fire Protection (FPFP) Subcommittee, and Residential Code Subcommittee. Board Counsel Charles Kilb also provided guidance regarding Open Meeting Law requirements, emphasizing the use of formal roll-call votes during remote meetings and clarifying that Board members may vote to approve meeting minutes even if they did not attend the meeting being memorialized.

Subcommittee reports highlighted continued progress toward development of the 11th Edition of the Massachusetts State Building Code. The BOCC reported ongoing review and approval of certification applications, examinations, continuing education courses, and extension requests. The FPFP Subcommittee reported completion of its review of Chapter 4 and continued work on Chapter 9. The Residential Code Subcommittee reported ongoing review of Chapter 4 and discussions regarding proposed changes affecting two-family dwellings. The Energy Advisory Committee continued its review of the commercial provisions of the 2024 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC), including discussions related to electric vehicle readiness requirements and simplification of compliance pathways. The Climate Resiliency Subcommittee reported that it has completed the majority of its assigned review of resiliency and floodplain-related provisions and remains on schedule with its review process.

The Executive Director reported that 230 Construction Supervisor Licenses (CSLs) were issued and 1,485 licenses were renewed during May 2026. Staff also thanked Board members and subcommittee participants for their continued work on the 11th Edition code update process and announced several upcoming vacancies on Technical Advisory Committees, including Manufactured Buildings, Greenhouse and Cannabis Facilities, Existing Buildings, Structural, and Geotechnical committees.

The Board approved a Building Official Certification Committee (BOCC) appointment submitted by the Massachusetts Building Commissioners and Inspectors Association (MBCIA). The Board also considered two Requests for Interpretation (RFIs). In RFI 2026-08, concerning the use of basement bulkheads as part of emergency escape and rescue opening arrangements, the Board voted to reaffirm and apply a prior BBRS interpretation to the current code edition, concluding that the existing interpretation remained valid despite changes in model code language. In RFI 2026-15, concerning bulkhead and stair enclosure configurations, the Board voted to take no action, determining that the issue was adequately addressed by existing code language and did not require a formal interpretation.

The Board also reviewed several code change proposals associated with the development of the 11th Edition. One proposal concerning energy storage systems was withdrawn at the request of the applicant and dismissed by the Board. The Board also received a presentation from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs regarding a proposal to expand flood-resilient construction requirements into FEMA-mapped 500-year floodplain areas. Discussion focused on flood risk, climate resiliency, long-term risk management, and the potential for additional review by the Climate Resiliency Subcommittee.

The meeting concluded with continued review of proposed Massachusetts amendments to the 2024 IECC residential provisions, including Chapters 1, 2, 4, and 6. Discussion focused on energy code requirements, front-end amendment formatting, reference standards, compliance pathways, and methods for presenting Massachusetts-specific amendments as part of the ongoing development of the 11th Edition State Building Code. The discussion reflected the substantial technical coordination currently underway among BBRS staff, Board members, and the various Technical Advisory Committees as the code development process continues.

MA Board of Registration of Architects (MBRA)

At its June 9, 2026 meeting, the Board of Registration of Architects convened in open session, approved the February 17, 2026 (ADA-formatted) meeting minutes with a minor correction to the date of the Board's April meeting, and approved the April 14, 2026 meeting minutes. The Board received the Executive Director's report on licensing activity, including an update on the Division's transition to the new Ellipse licensing system. Staff reported that nearly all pending applications have been successfully migrated, with the remaining applications awaiting either licensure fees or NCARB records. Members also discussed implementation of the annual CORI authorization process and ongoing efforts to assist licensees experiencing account-linking issues during the transition. The Board further agreed to hold a special meeting later in June to address NCARB Annual Business Meeting materials and Board election matters.

The Board also continued its discussion regarding implementation of the Commonwealth's newly adopted alternative pathways to architectural licensure for applicants without a NAAB-accredited degree. Following discussion with representatives of NCARB regarding education and experience equivalency standards used in other jurisdictions, the Board voted to direct staff to prepare a policy advisory establishing guidance for acceptable combinations of education and professional experience for future Board consideration. The Board also reviewed a request to award Health, Safety, and Welfare (HSW) continuing education credit for university-level architectural instruction and voted to request additional information regarding the applicant's instructional responsibilities and course content before making a final determination. No Board Counsel report or additional matters were raised during the open session. The Board then voted to enter executive and closed sessions to consider confidential investigative and disciplinary matters, after which the meeting adjourned. The Board's next scheduled meeting is August 11, 2026.

Board of Fire Prevention Regulations (BFPR)

Its July 2nd meeting was cancelled. The next meeting of the board is August 6, 2026.

Board of Elevator Regulation

At its June 23, 2026 meeting, the Board of Elevator Regulations considered several variance requests involving existing conditions, accessibility requirements, and code compliance challenges. The Board revisited a Springfield library elevator case involving the removal of a battery-lowering device that was not required at the time of installation. While the petitioner provided documentation from the Architectural Access Board indicating that such a device is not currently required, Board members expressed concern that it may have been installed in response to a request from local officials. The Board voted to continue the matter for up to 60 days to allow the petitioner to obtain confirmation from the local building official and fire department that the battery-lowering system is not required.

The Board also reviewed a request associated with a newly installed elevator in Arlington where an existing structural beam reduced headroom within the elevator machine room below the minimum code requirement. Board members questioned why the condition had not been addressed during design and construction and encouraged the petitioner to explore code-compliant alternatives before seeking relief. Concluding that additional information was needed regarding possible design

modifications and the extent of any hardship, the Board voted to place the matter on hold for up to 60 days and requested that the petitioner return with either a code-compliant solution or a more narrowly tailored variance request supported by additional documentation.

In a separate matter involving a church renovation project in Boston, the Board considered requests related to a LULA elevator installation, including variances for pit depth and maximum travel distance. The petitioner explained that significant project delays, including those resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in elevator manufacturers, necessitated modifications to an earlier approved design. Board members discussed the project's history, accessibility requirements, and cost implications associated with alternative elevator types while evaluating whether the requested relief remained consistent with the intent of a previously granted variance.

The Board also received public comments submitted following its May 6 code hearing, reviewed several administrative variance approvals, and discussed a safety notification involving an elevator machine room condition identified during an inspection. The Board was informed that corrective measures were being required to address safe access to a secondary machine space and took no further action beyond acknowledging the notification.

Massachusetts Sheet Metal Board

At its June 17, 2026 meeting, the Board of Examiners of Sheet Metal Workers received updates on the Division's transition to the eLIPSE licensing system, including ongoing efforts to address user feedback and assist licensees with account creation and license management. The Board also reviewed initiatives to improve accessibility of Division web content through enhanced compatibility with screen-reading software and welcomed new Board members through a round of introductions. The Board discussed recent PSI examination results, noting strong performance among Journeyman I candidates and lower pass rates for Journeyman II candidates, and considered the possibility of reviewing examination data with the testing vendor to better understand candidate performance trends.

The Board's primary substantive discussion involved an appeal filed by Paulo Baganha of Edgewood Design + Architecture, Inc. concerning a Commonwealth Inspector's denial related to a paint booth exhaust system. The appellant argued that the installation constituted a plenum system rather than a duct system under the International Mechanical Code and further cited provisions of NFPA 33 permitting concrete exhaust plenums under certain conditions. Board members questioned both the appellant and the inspector regarding code interpretation, system design, airflow requirements, and the relationship between the International Mechanical Code and NFPA standards. Following testimony and closing statements, the Board voted to deliberate the matter in closed session and advised the parties that a written decision would be issued following its review. The meeting concluded with no additional business raised under topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair before the Board entered Executive, Investigative, and Adjudicatory Sessions.

Bureau of Pipefitters, Refrigeration Technicians, and Sprinkler Fitters

At its June 17, 2026 meeting, the Bureau of Pipefitters, Refrigeration Technicians, and Sprinkler Fitters addressed several administrative and licensing matters, including routine reports from staff and counsel. The Bureau's primary substantive action involved the review of a sprinkler fitter apprentice license renewal request. Following discussion regarding the applicant's progress toward completing apprenticeship coursework, documented work experience, and readiness to pursue licensure, the Bureau unanimously approved what members characterized as a final renewal, while emphasizing the expectation that the applicant complete the remaining requirements and sit for the journeyman examination within the renewal period.

The Bureau also reviewed a compliance report from the Office of Public Safety and Inspections, which indicated a modest increase in enforcement activity compared to the previous month, including inspections and compliance actions across the pipefitting, sprinkler fitting, and refrigeration trades. During open session, members discussed the importance of ensuring that apprentices are properly licensed while working in the field and raised questions regarding certification documentation needed by Massachusetts licensees seeking reciprocal licensure opportunities in Rhode Island. Staff clarified existing procedures for verifying apprenticeship hours and license history and confirmed that applications continue to be reviewed for compliance with all statutory and regulatory requirements. The meeting concluded with routine administrative business and adjournment.

Board of State Examiners of Plumbers and Gas Fitters

At its July 1, 2026 meeting, the Board of State Examiners of Plumbers and Gas Fitters convened in regular session to conduct routine Board business, review licensing and product approval activity, receive updates on the ongoing plumbing code revision process, consider vocational school project requests, act on several variance petitions, and hear an appeal of a local plumbing inspector's decision concerning cross-connection protection requirements.

The Board approved the regular and executive session meeting minutes from June 3, 2026. During the Executive Director's Report, staff reported that 6,370 products had been reviewed during the preceding month and provided an update on licensing activity, including the issuance of apprentice, journeyman, master, corporation, LLC, and inspector licenses. The Executive Director also recognized Board staff for successfully completing the annual license renewal cycle. The meeting opened with a moment of remembrance for Revere plumbing inspector Darren DiBartolomeo, who passed away in June, and the Board also recognized the retirement of longtime inspector Peter DeFreitas for his many years of service to the plumbing industry.

The Board received an update from the Plumbing Code Subcommittee regarding its June 17 meeting. Staff reported that the Subcommittee continues its review of 248 CMR, having progressed through portions of Sections 10.10 and 10.12, with the next meeting scheduled for July 15, 2026. Members were again reminded that proposed code modification forms remain available on the Board's website for stakeholder submission and review. The Board also considered and unanimously approved an expansion of its delegated authority regarding unoccupied structures, allowing structures of 2,000 square feet or less to seek relief from restroom requirements provided they comply with applicable OSHA requirements for employee access to nearby restroom facilities. The delegation will remain in effect for three years while the Board evaluates whether permanent code revisions are warranted.

The Board next approved two vocational school project requests. The first authorized Nashoba Valley Technical High School students to perform plumbing installations associated with a Habitat for Humanity mixed-use residential project in Acton that includes an office and residential units. The second approved Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School students to install plumbing for a new service kitchen within Smith Hall in Danvers.

The Board then considered several variance requests. The first involved a proposed coffee shop in Revere, where the petitioner sought relief to retain portions of an existing PVC drainage and vent system within a mixed-use building. Following discussion, the Board approved the request with conditions requiring cast-iron drainage piping where required by code while allowing connection to the existing PVC vent system. A second variance involving an unoccupied storage garage in Hudson was approved, allowing relief from interceptor and plumbing fixture requirements subject to installation of protective bollards and continued access to nearby restroom facilities. The Board similarly approved a request from the Town of Medfield for a municipal vehicle storage garage,

permitting use of restroom facilities in an adjacent building while requiring installation of a self-contained containment system in lieu of a traditional trench drain and separator. A fourth variance request involving science laboratory neutralization equipment for a new high school in Millis was withdrawn prior to Board consideration.

The Board also conducted a formal appeal hearing concerning a Woburn plumbing inspector's determination that a residential point-of-use water filtration system required additional cross-connection protection. The appeal centered on the interpretation of 248 CMR and the relationship between the plumbing code and Department of Environmental Protection cross-connection regulations governing protection of the public potable water supply. The Board heard testimony from the appellant, the local plumbing inspector, municipal water officials, and Board staff regarding applicable code provisions, permitting requirements, manufacturer specifications, and appropriate backflow prevention measures before entering deliberations in closed session pursuant to law.

Throughout the meeting, Board members emphasized the importance of maintaining consistent statewide code enforcement, protecting the public drinking water supply, ensuring practical application of plumbing requirements for unoccupied structures, and continuing the Board's ongoing review of the Commonwealth's plumbing and gas code. The meeting concluded following the appeal hearing and the Board's scheduled executive and investigative sessions.

MAAB (Subcommittee on Regulations)

At its June 24, 2026 meeting, the MAAB Subcommittee on Regulations continued its comprehensive review of the draft regulations for the proposed revision to 521 CMR, focusing primarily on the definitions contained within Section 100. Building upon work completed at prior meetings, the Subcommittee systematically reviewed, discussed, and voted on numerous proposed definitions, comparing language drawn from the existing 521 CMR, the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG), the Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG), and the Minnesota Accessibility Code. Throughout the meeting, members emphasized improving consistency with nationally recognized accessibility standards while retaining Massachusetts-specific provisions where appropriate. The Subcommittee approved revisions to numerous definitions, including mezzanine, play component, project, qualified historic building, ramp, repair, running slope, self-service storage, sidewalk, story, and other technical terms, while tabling several items requiring additional research, including the treatment of occupancy classifications and the use of the term "multiple dwelling."

The Subcommittee also continued its broader effort to modernize and streamline the accessibility regulations by removing obsolete or redundant definitions, clarifying terminology, and ensuring that defined terms are used consistently throughout the proposed code. Members discussed how best to integrate occupancy classifications from the Massachusetts Building Code, improve coordination with federal accessibility standards, and eliminate unnecessary duplication between definitions and scoping provisions. The meeting reflected the Subcommittee's ongoing objective of producing a clearer, more consistent, and more user-friendly accessibility code while preserving the Board's authority to address Massachusetts-specific accessibility requirements through the variance process. The Subcommittee is scheduled to continue its review of the draft regulations at its next meeting on July 22, 2026.

- END -