



# Massachusetts Municipal Lawyers Association

March 3, 2023

To: The Honorable Michael J. Rodrigues, Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
The Honorable Cindy Friedman, Vice-Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Re: Sections 38 and 42-44 of House Bill 58 - An Act Making Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2023 to Provide for Supplementing Certain Existing Appropriations and for Certain Other Activities and Projects

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Dear Chair Rodrigues and Vice-Chair Friedman,

I am writing to you in my capacity as the President of the Massachusetts Municipal Lawyers Association (the "MMLA"), the Commonwealth's municipal bar association, to communicate our strong support of language contained in the Fiscal Year 2023 Supplemental Budget before the Senate Committee on Ways and Means (House Bill 58), that would extend certain COVID-19 relief measures applicable to municipalities and other public bodies subject to the Open Meeting Law.

Specifically, the MMLA urges passage of Sections 38 and 42-44 of the budget package, which would extend the local option to remotely participate at meetings of public bodies, agencies and commissions, as well as Town Meetings, until March 31, 2025 (two years from the current expiration date of March 31, 2023).

This extension is an important step in ensuring public access to local government while also recognizing the realities still faced by municipalities and districts across the Commonwealth due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the extension also provides all interested parties ample opportunity to develop a more permanent solution. MMLA endorses a more permanent solution, and we welcome the opportunity to partner with you and your Senate colleagues as such solution is developed. Again, MMLA strongly supports the extensions included in H.58 and urges their inclusion in the Senate Committee's report of the FY23 Supplemental Budget to provide public bodies throughout the Commonwealth with certainty prior to the current extension's expiration on March 31, 2023.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and for your leadership.

Sincerely,

Matthew G. Feher, Esq.  
President, MMLA

CC: The Honorable Karen E. Spilka, Senate President