



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF FUNDING MECHANISMS FOR BOSTON'S COASTAL PROTECTION

WHEREAS, Boston's waterfront is a historic and treasured public resource protected under the Public Waterfront Act (Chapter 91), and as sea levels rise and coastal flooding intensifies due to climate change, the City must prioritize waterfront planning, funding, and development that integrates resilience, equity, accessibility, and long-term stewardship; *and*

WHEREAS, According to the First Street Foundation and the Massachusetts Climate Change Assessment, Suffolk County faces the greatest flood risk in the Commonwealth, with more than 45 percent of critical infrastructure, including hospitals, schools, police, fire, transportation, and utility assets, located within flood-exposed areas, a risk that is projected to increase substantially by mid-century; *and*

WHEREAS, Coastal flooding driven by sea level rise, storm surge, and extreme weather events has increased in both frequency and severity, placing thousands of Boston residents at risk of displacement, particularly low-income households, environmental justice communities, renters, and residents living in basement and first-floor units within flood zones; *and*

WHEREAS, Boston has made significant progress in climate adaptation planning, including the establishment of the Office of Climate Resilience and the development of district-scale coastal resilience projects that emphasize flood pathways, nature-based solutions, and integrated gray infrastructure; *and*

WHEREAS, Despite these planning advances, the scale and urgency of implementation requires substantial and sustained capital investment to move projects from planning and design into construction, operation, and long-term maintenance; *and*

WHEREAS, The Boston Green Ribbon Commission has launched a Coastal Resilience Funding and Financing Blueprint to address this challenge, estimating that total costs to protect Boston's coastline could range from \$4 billion to \$10 billion, with over half of necessary projects requiring completion by 2040 in order to close urgent flood pathways and protect people, infrastructure, and economic activity; *and*

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WHEREAS, The Green Ribbon Commission Blueprint emphasizes that coastal resilience investments generate substantial public value, including avoided property loss, protection of critical infrastructure, housing stability, job creation, tax base preservation, and regional economic benefits, and that every dollar invested in resilience can yield multiple dollars in avoided disaster and recovery costs; *and*

WHEREAS, In November 2025, the Commonwealth released the ResilientCoasts Plan, the first statewide, 50-year framework for coastal resilience, which establishes 15 Coastal Resilience Districts, identifies near-term adaptation areas, and calls for district-scale and regional approaches to financing and implementation, recognizing that piecemeal, project-by-project funding is insufficient to meet the scale of the climate challenge; *and*

WHEREAS, The ResilientCoasts Plan and the associated ResilientMass Funding and Finance Strategy identify new and emerging financing tools, including district-level financing mechanisms, special assessment districts, public-private partnerships, transfer of development rights programs, and state-enabled revenue authorities, to help municipalities like Boston move from planning to implementation at scale; *and*

WHEREAS, Boston sits at the center of Coastal Resilience District 5, which includes the inner harbor, Logan International Airport, Designated Port Areas, and neighborhoods such as East Boston, Charlestown, the North End, and the Seaport, areas that collectively protect statewide economic activity, transportation networks, housing, and environmental justice communities, making Boston well-positioned to serve as a pilot city for district-scale resilience financing; *and*

WHEREAS, A city-level climate bank or climate financing entity could serve as a critical tool to aggregate public, private, state, federal, and philanthropic capital; leverage state and federal resilience programs; support district-scale coastal protection projects; and ensure that investments are deployed equitably, transparently, and in alignment with Boston's climate, housing, and environmental justice goals; *and*

WHEREAS, Cities across the country have demonstrated that climate banks and similar financing vehicles can accelerate project delivery, reduce borrowing costs, attract private capital, create jobs, and ensure that historically marginalized communities benefit from climate investments; *and*

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED, that the Boston City Council hold a hearing to examine the implementation and funding of coastal resilience strategies, including:

1. Alignment with State and Regional Frameworks

- How Boston's coastal resilience efforts align with the Green Ribbon Commission Coastal Resilience Funding and Financing Blueprint and the Commonwealth's

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ResilientCoasts and ResilientMass strategies.

2. Financing and Funding Mechanisms

- Potential city-level financing tools, including the establishment of a climate bank, quasi-governmental authority or similar entity.
- District-scale financing strategies, special assessment districts, public-private partnerships, and state-enabled revenue mechanisms identified in ResilientCoasts.

3. Project Prioritization and Equity

- Criteria for prioritizing resilience investments that protect life safety, housing stability, critical infrastructure, environmental justice communities, and public access to the waterfront.

4. Governance and Accountability

- Oversight structures, interagency coordination, and reporting mechanisms to ensure transparency, fiscal responsibility, and long-term maintenance of resilience infrastructure.

5. Leveraging State and Federal Resources

- Strategies for positioning Boston to access ResilientMass pilots, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers funding, FEMA and NOAA programs, and other state and federal opportunities.

6. Public and Stakeholder Engagement

- Approaches for engaging residents, community organizations, labor, environmental advocates, and the business community in shaping and supporting large-scale resilience investments.; ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER***

ORDERED: that representatives from the Office of Climate Resilience, Boston Planning Department, Green Ribbon Commission, relevant state agencies, community organizations, and financing experts be invited to testify.

Filed on: January 28, 2026