



Boston City Council

Erin J. Murphy

Councilor At-Large

Chair Gabriela Coletta Zapata

Committee on Government Operations

Re: Request for Clarification on Homeowner Rebate and Property Tax Relief Proposals

Dear Chair Coletta Zapata,

As the City Council prepares to vote on critical property tax relief measures that directly affect our residents—particularly seniors and long-term homeowners facing immediate financial strain—I am seeking urgent clarification on key aspects of the administration's proposed homeowner rebate program. I had prepared these questions for our promised second hearing before a vote, and to ensure transparency and informed decision-making, I request detailed answers to the following questions, through the Chair of the Committee on Government Operations:

1. Rebate Calculation & Distribution

- **Methodology:** What method is used to determine the rebate amount for homeowners?
- **Uniformity:** Will all homeowners receive the same rebate amount, or will it vary based on property value?
- **Projected Averages:** What is the projected average rebate amount across different property value ranges?
- **Impact Assessment:** How does the administration ensure that the rebate meaningfully offsets the impact of rising property taxes?
- **Timing:** When would homeowners receive these rebates, and would they be timely enough to offset the current tax increase?

2. Impact on Renters & Multi-Family Homes

- **Market Influence:** Can the administration provide evidence that an increase in the residential exemption would directly lead to higher rent prices, given that rent levels are influenced by multiple market factors?
- **Historical Data:** Has there been historical evidence showing that past tax savings for landlords have resulted in lower rent prices for tenants?

3. Legislative Strategy & Feasibility

- **State House Passage:** Since all home rule petitions must pass through the State House—and considering the Mayor's prior tax plan failed in the Senate—what assurances exist that this proposal will pass?
- **Multiple Options:** Given the legislative uncertainty, would the administration support sending multiple property tax relief options to the State House to maximize our chances of securing meaningful relief for Boston residents?

4. Lack of a Promised Second Hearing & Rushed Process

- Committee Process:

At the January 27th joint hearing, four significant proposals were discussed, including:

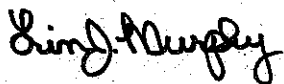
- Docket #0142: Home Rule Petition to increase the Residential Exemption to 40%
 - Docket #0236: The Mayor's Home Rule Petition for a citywide tax rebate program
 - Docket #0269: A hearing order on residential property values and the assessing process
 - Docket #0270: A proposal to adopt the Good Landlord Tax Abatement
- Missed Hearing: Despite the Chair of Government Operations promising a second hearing for the two tax-related proposals, that hearing never occurred.
 - Implications: Instead, only the Mayor's proposal is being advanced for a vote without the promised additional public discussion.

5. The Need for a Fair and Transparent Process

- Constituent Impact: Homeowners—especially seniors and long-term residents—are facing immediate financial strain from rising property taxes.
- Process Concerns: Rushing through only one proposal while neglecting others does not serve the best interests of our residents.
- Request: I urge the administration to provide the requested details on the rebate program and support a transparent, complete process before the vote.

I appreciate your prompt response, as these issues must be addressed before the Council is asked to make a final decision.

Sincerely,



Erin J. Murphy
Boston City Councilor At-Large