

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS ENRIQUE J. PEPÉN



CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY SIX

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO EXPLORE SNOW REMOVAL RELIEF AND OPTIONS

WHEREAS, The January 2026 winter storm, named “Winter Storm Fern” by the Weather Channel, expanded across much of the country, impacting the southern and eastern United States most powerfully, with Boston receiving around two feet of snow over the course of 24 hours and several days of freezing temperatures the week after; *and*

WHEREAS, Climate change makes extreme weather events like Winter Storm Fern, summer heat waves, and fall hurricanes more common, requiring dynamic city services to fit the needs of our changing climate; *and*

WHEREAS, Residents work hard to clear their sidewalks and driveways as the City’s Public Works Department works hard to clear miles of city road, leading to public and private efforts colliding at the curb, with covered sidewalks and blocked driveways immediately following and days after the storm; *and*

WHEREAS, City crews continue to work at clearing and removing the remaining snow, even with overnight shifts, to address the blinding heights of snowbanks, covered streets, and inaccessible crosswalks, sidewalks, and ramps; *and*

WHEREAS, In regions where snow fall is more frequent and compounds due to consistently lower temperatures, other cities demonstrate the other efficient practices for snow removal, rather than clearing, as a means to manage the height and expanse of snowbanks, a major concern in our city in the wake of Winter Storm Fern; *and*

WHEREAS, Many residents, particularly those who are elderly or have disabilities may struggle to clear snow from their sidewalks which puts these neighbors at risk of fines and leaves parts of public sidewalks uncleared, with the only options of relief being helpful neighbors or costly private snow clearing companies; *and*

WHEREAS, Exploring programs that can provide relief to community members in need of support after storms with high snowfall can help to expedite the clearing of Boston’s sidewalks and streets, increasing community safety and maintaining access to public sidewalks; **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT**

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing on snow removal relief and practices. Officials from the Department of Public Works, Emergency Management, and community members will be invited to testify.

Filed on: February 4, 2026