



Town of Dighton
Office of the Town Administrator
979 Somerset Avenue
Dighton, MA 02715

March 26, 2024

The Honorable Patricia A. Haddad
Massachusetts House of Representatives
House Committee on Ways & Means
State House, Room 238
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Marc R. Pacheco
Massachusetts State Senate
Dean of the Senate
State House, Room 312-B
Boston, MA 02133

RE: Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Chapter 70 Funding & Local Aid Priorities

Dear Representative Haddad and Senator Pacheco:

On behalf and at the request of the Dighton Board of Selectmen, I write today to express the Town of Dighton's Chapter 70 funding and local aid priorities being considered as part of the Commonwealth's Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) state budget.

Dighton town officials share the notable and impactful concerns of countless Massachusetts local and school officials regarding the inadequacy of Governor Healey's proposed Chapter 70 and regional transportation funding levels. We respectfully seek your help in doing all that you can to increase these important funding priorities as you prepare for the House and Senate budget debates in April and May.

Regarding Chapter 70 funding in the Governor's proposed House 2 budget, the Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School District (D-R) is one of 211 school districts in that would remain a minimum aid district in FY25, currently expected to receive a minimal increase over FY24 of only \$30 per pupil. This proposed per pupil minimum aid increase is negligible on its own, but becomes even more insufficient in the face of proposed cuts to regional school transportation and required cost increases to provide legally-mandated special education services. The Board of Selectmen strongly supports the Massachusetts Municipal Association's request to increase Minimum Aid to \$100 per student in the FY25 state budget.

Locally, Dighton's FY25 budget challenges center on the fact that, due to proposed Chapter 70 funding and related issues, Dighton's projected FY25 D-R assessment is more than double—by more than \$500,000 at \$1.09 million—what the Town has had the ability to fund for the last six years, completely crowding out new year-over-year available town revenues of \$885,000. A overview of Dighton's FY25 budget planning efforts to date can be accessed [here](#).

In addition to supporting a continued state commitment for Chapter 90 funding to help maintain Dighton's 62.88 miles of roadways, the **Board of Selectmen also urges the Legislature to continue supporting the proposed 3% increase for Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA) in the FY25 state budget.** We appreciate the Legislature's commitment during the last two years to increase UGGA *above* the percentage increase in forecasted state revenue growth. In fact, the last two years increased by double the consensus revenue figure, which was an essential investment by the Commonwealth that directly supports each and every community in Massachusetts. This funding helped to make steady progress back from the devastating funding cuts during the Great Recession — funding that still has not recovered. This means that Dighton's municipal budget has continued to rely more heavily on the local property tax, which is capped under Proposition 2½.

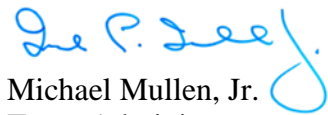
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Even with the Governor's proposed 3% increase to UGGA for fiscal year 2025, the UGGA account still remains *below* pre-Great Recession levels, without adjusting for inflation.

Again, we respectfully seek your help in doing all that you can to support these critically important funding priorities throughout the FY25 state budget process. This funding is integral as we continue working to support high-quality educational opportunities for students and maintain our core municipal services that all Dighton residents deservedly expect.

As always, thank you very much for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,



Michael Mullen, Jr.
Town Administrator

cc: Dighton Board of Selectmen
Dighton Finance Committee
Bill Runey, D-R School Superintendent
D-R School Committee