



333 Washington Street | Suite 853 | Boston, MA 02108 | 617.720.1000
www.masstaxpayers.com

MTF Brief

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Governor Baker's ARPA Signing Message

Today, Governor Baker signed a \$4 billion spending bill that uses \$1.45 billion in fiscal year 2021 surplus revenues and up to \$2.55 billion in federal Fiscal Relief Funds to support a variety of COVID response and recovery efforts.

Governor Baker did not veto any spending in the bill sent to him by the House and Senate in early December, but did use his powers to veto or propose amendments to several provisions:

- Governor Baker vetoed line-item language in seven spending items in the bill. The language vetoes include:
 - Striking language requiring the Administration to report on the methodology used to distribute funds 30 days prior to and spending obligations to be made.
 - This language was struck from spending to support homeownership opportunities, production and preservation of affordable rental units, and rehabilitation and modernization of public housing units.
 - Eliminating language requiring that a portion of a \$15 million item dedicated to public land investments be used to increase the grant cap for the state's Conservation Partnership Grant Program;
 - Removing a requirement that funding for tree planting only support efforts on publicly owned land or land owned by non-profit organizations;
 - Eliminating a reporting requirement related to the agricultural and commercial fishing grant program created in the bill;
 - Striking language requiring the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to make \$100 million in public school air quality grant payments by January 1st as well as a requirement to report on the grant program by March 1st.
- Governor Baker vetoed section 79 of the bill, which established criteria for an essential worker premium pay program. The Governor signed sections 73 and 82 which provides \$500 million for the implementation of a premium pay program to be administered by the Executive Office of Administration and Finance (ANF). The Governor's signing message states that, absent a legislative override, ANF will develop and implement a premium pay program immediately. The message does not state how the program will work, but state's

that the administration, “could send out \$500 checks to almost 1 million Massachusetts residents as soon as possible.”

- Governor Baker returned section 72 of the bill with amendment. Section 72 establishes the Behavioral Trust Fund, which receives \$200 million under in the bill. The Governor proposes changing the fund’s governing language to eliminate a requirement that all funding be appropriated by the Legislature in the future and instead puts the fund under the control of the Secretary of Health and Human Services.