

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Gobi and Lesser advocate for ‘Industrial Mill Building Task Force’ as part of Economic Development Package**

BOSTON- **State Senator Anne Gobi (D-Spencer)** offered an amendment to the Economic Development Bill that would create a Task Force to develop a strategy on the best way to encourage and incentivize the Redevelopment of Old Industrial Mill Buildings in the Commonwealth.

“The creation of the task force would finally begin the process of taking a comprehensive look at how best the Commonwealth might look to incentivize, and redevelop, the large number of old mill buildings that exist in the state,” said Gobi. “Many of these buildings sprung up right next to the Commonwealth’s many rivers and waterways at the turn of the century to take advantage of their ability to produce hydropower, which powered the state’s first industrial mills. Many still hold the potential of being small generators of renewable energy that could be added to the state’s energy portfolio.”

“Our old mill buildings are an iconic piece of our history, but they can also be part of our future. As we have seen with the Ludlow Mills, these buildings offer prime redevelopment opportunities, whether it’s in new housing or new businesses like local breweries and distilleries. We could even reclaim their original purpose of using our rivers to produce clean, renewable energy for local communities. This task force will look at all of the above and make recommendations that we can use to spur local economic growth and create jobs,” said **Sen. Eric P. Lesser (D-Longmeadow)**, who authored the Economic Development Bill as Senate Chair of the Committee on Economic Development.

Western Massachusetts, like so many other parts of the Commonwealth, contains many old Mill Buildings that could benefit from such a comprehensive redevelopment plan.

Gobi's amendment directs the task force to formulate a plan on how best the Commonwealth of Massachusetts can assist these structures in being re-developed, rehabilitated, and revitalized to encourage economic activity.

"I strongly believe that the task force should prioritize redeveloping these old industrial mill buildings by encouraging these sites to become centers that utilize and produce renewable energy sources," Gobi added.

The primary goal of the Task Force is to create a comprehensive strategy to help incentivize the redevelopment of these old mill buildings. The task force will review existing state and federal tax incentive programs and renewable energy production, create an inventory of existing mill buildings, investigate potential uses, identify strategies to improve their energy efficiency, and prevent their further structural and environmental degradation. The task force will also explore innovative permitting processes, zoning regulations, and building codes to encourage redevelopment.

Gobi's amendment calls for the task force to meet and issue a report, including legislative recommendations to the: Joint Committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies, and the clerk of the House and Senate, by August 1st, 2019. The membership of the Mill Building Task Force, to be appointed by the Secretary of Housing and Economic Development, would consist of:

- The Secretary of Housing & Economic Development (or his designee) (1), who will serve as Chairman.
- The Secretary of Energy & Environmental Affairs (or his designee) (1)
- The Chairmen of the Joint Committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technology (2)
- The Director of MassDevelopment (or his designee)(1)
- 4 members of the state legislature, 2 from the House of Representatives and 2 from the State Senate, who represent communities with Mill buildings (4)
- The Director of the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (or his designee) (1)
- 2 owners of old mill buildings, one active and one inactive (2)
- 1 Representative of the Massachusetts Utilities (1)
- 1 Representative from an Economic Development Organization
- 3 Representatives of Massachusetts Planning Organizations; 1 from the western region, 1 from the central region and 1 from the eastern region.

For more information please contact Senator Gobi's office at 617-722-1540.

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