

August 4, 2026

Via Electronic Mail

Her Excellency Maura Healey
Governor of Massachusetts
State House, Room 360
Boston, MA 02133
Maura.Healey@mass.gov

The Hon. Kimberley Driscoll
Lieutenant Governor
State House, Room 360
Boston, MA 02133
Kim.Driscoll@mass.gov

Re: S3235, An Act Relative to the Pilgrim Memorial Park in Plymouth

Dear Governor Healey and Lt. Governor Driscoll:

I write to request that you veto Senate 3235, *Act Relative to the Pilgrim Memorial Park in Plymouth*. This bill allows the Commonwealth to lease the Pilgrim Memorial Park in Plymouth to the town of Plymouth for 25 years, with unlimited 10-year extensions available. In reviewing this bill, I have identified several issues of significant concern.

First, the language does not specifically identify a party that is responsible for long-term capital improvements at the park. While the bill makes clear that Plymouth is responsible for utilities and general day-to-day maintenance, it does not directly address capital improvements. It does state that the lease *may* provide for improvements and facilities, together with the land and appurtenances, and that Plymouth cannot design or construct any facilities on the premises without the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance's (DCAMM) permission. But it does not clearly state who is responsible for the costs - Plymouth, or the Commonwealth. Such ambiguity, for an indefinite period of time, suggests no entity will be responsible, not a favorable result.

Second, the language allows for 10-year extensions of the lease every 10 years, with no end date on the extensions. Typically, a lease would allow for a certain number of extensions; it would not go on in perpetuity. Additionally, the bill language states the lease may be extended "at the discretion of the parties named above," but does not provide any procedures or guidance should the parties not agree to an extension. This lack of guidance creates a risk that the parcel may be abandoned, misused, or improperly disposed of at the end of a lease, opening the possibility of fraud, waste, or abuse. Unfortunately, we have seen this scenario play out on prior occasions, wasting countless millions of public dollars, along the way.

Third, the language states that the park will be accessible to the general public "*when not in use by permittees*," but has no parameters around any minimum public use time. Under the language, Plymouth becomes solely responsible for creating rules and establishing fees with no input from the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). This runs counter to the idea

that this area ought to be used primarily for the pleasure of the public. In theory, Plymouth could unilaterally issue permits that restrict public access at all times, if the municipality so chooses.

Fourth, the bill additionally does not address or give guidance to Plymouth's use of fees that they may establish for this park. Not only may fees create a cost-prohibitive barrier to the public use of this park, but the lack of guidance on the use of fees indicates that Plymouth may redirect these fees to any cause or use. The nature of fees should be to pay for the upkeep of the park (operationally); unfortunately, as drafted there is no such restriction, allowing Plymouth to redirect these fees. These fees could be used for other town operated park property or any other unrelated municipal use, without regard to the state of Pilgrim Memorial Park.

Fifth, the bill is silent as to the condition by which Plymouth must return the land to the Commonwealth in. This presents a significant liability for the Commonwealth upon the open ended return of these 17 acres +/- to the Commonwealth.

Finally the bill does not include any language that speaks to what, if any, compensation the state would receive from the lease. There should, at the least, be language that discusses compensation to the Commonwealth, especially if Plymouth is setting fees for use of the park.

As you are well aware, the limited funding received by both DCR and DCAMM does not provide future funding to restore such property, should it be returned to the Commonwealth in a condition less than "broom clean".

The ambiguity in the bill's language will lead to problems over time. The Office of the Inspector General has seen this play out before. As we identified in our [letter](#) regarding DCR's management of the Pope's Island lease with the New Bedford Port Authority, a lack of clarity can lead to gross mismanagement of a state asset. This puts Pilgrim Memorial Park at risk of being turned back to the Commonwealth in poor condition.

As Inspector General, I am charged with the prevention of fraud, waste, and abuse of state resources. This bill as written opens far too many possibilities for such to occur. A veto would help prevent future fraud, waste, and abuse from taking place and allow a future bill to address these significant concerns.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey S. Shapiro, Esq., CIG
Inspector General

cc (by email):

Kate Cook, Chief of Staff, Governor's Office

Matthew Gorzkowicz, Secretary, Executive Office of Administration and Finance

Adam Baacke, Commissioner, DCAMM

Nicole LaChapelle, Commissioner, DCR

Tom Ashe, Deputy Chief of Staff for Legislative Affairs, Governor's Office

The Honorable Dylan Fernandes

The Honorable Michelle Badger

The Honorable Kathleen LaNatra

Town Manager Derek Brindisi, Town of Plymouth

Joshua Giles, GOPP Division Director, OIG

Nataliya Urciuoli, Senior Executive Assistant, OIG