



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

SENATOR EDWARD J. KENNEDY

First Middlesex District

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June 10, 2019

The Honorable Marc R. Pacheco, Senate Chair
The Honorable Danielle W. Gregoire, House Chair
Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight
Massachusetts State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairman Pacheco and Chairwoman Gregoire,

I appreciate the Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight acting swiftly to consider **H.3750, An Act authorizing the city of Lowell to transfer and have air rights over certain parcels of park and state land**. This special legislation, filed by my colleague Representative Dave Nangle, grants the necessary air rights to the Lowell School Department for the construction of two pedestrian footbridges, a critical feature of the long-anticipated construction of a new, state-of-the-art high school in the city.

The high school project is anticipated to cost \$343.4 million, with \$210 million in funding coming from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, representing the largest public building project in the city's history. The design and budget of the project received approval earlier this year, marking significant progress in a process that began three years ago.

Slated to occupy a similar footprint to the current high school, the new Lowell High School will be built in the historic urban landscape of the city's downtown. Its location will be among the facility's greatest assets, but will also demand several unique design components. Both the current facility and the anticipated facility are divided by the Merrimack Canal and the adjacent, permanently protected Lucy Larcom Park. In 1980, the construction of two pedestrian footbridges adjoining buildings on either side of this divide was authorized, and has since allowed students to walk between buildings without going outside. Plans for the new high school call for the replacement and relocation of these structures, compelling the need for this legislation to secure appropriate air rights.

The protection of parks and open space in accordance with Article 97 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth is a worthy objective, and any action to alter such space warrants sufficient scrutiny. Given my familiarity with the high school project, however, I am fully confident that the construction of new footbridges, as authorized by this legislation, will pose no destructive impact to the open space in question.

Approval of this legislation will mark an important step towards finalizing plans for a new Lowell High School, a project that will have a transformative impact on the City of Lowell for generations to come. For that reason, I hope that the Committee supports the expeditious passage of H.3750. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact my office at (617) 722-1630.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E J Kennedy".

Edward J. Kennedy
First Middlesex District