TOWN OF WINTHROP
OFFICE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

Town Hall, 1 Metcalf Square, Winthrop, MA 02152 Telephone: 617-846-1852

December 15, 2025

Rebecca L. Tepper, Secretary
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, Massachusetts 02114

Re: Town of Winthrop Cooling Corridors FY 2 6 Grant Denial

Dear Secretary Tepper:

On behalf of the citizens of the Town of Winthrop I am writing to register the Town's protest of the denial of our application submitted under the Commonwealth's Cooling Corridors Grant Program and to request further review by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. The grounds for this request are (1) that EEA has denied Winthrop's application without any legal authority whatsoever, and (2) that such unlawful withholding of the Cooling Corridor funds that Winthrop clearly qualifies for increases its vulnerable population to weather-related illnesses and resulting death.

G.L. c. 40A, §3A makes an MBTA community ineligible for certain specifically enumerated state funding programs if it fails to comply with the terms of § 3A. The Cooling Corridors grant is not among them. Further, 760 CMR 72.09 which adds thirteen discretionary grant programs that may take compliance with M.G.L. c. 40A, § 3A into consideration when making grant award recommendations, does not include the Cooling Corridors grant even though the regulation cites two other grants administered by EEA, (LAND and MVP).

Furthermore, if EEA relies upon 760 CMR 72.09(2) for authority to disqualify Winthrop, this reliance is misplaced. Nowhere in the stated purpose of the Cooling Corridors grant (or in EEA's mission to protect, preserve, and enhance the Commonwealth's environmental resources while ensuring a clean energy future for the state's residents) is there any reference to increasing multi-family housing. There is no rational relationship between the purpose of the Cooling Corridors grant and the MBTA Communities Act. Therefore, EEA has no right or authority to consider local housing policies when evaluating applications for discretionary grant programs such as Cooling Corridors.

As you well know, extreme heat is one of the leading causes of weather-related illness and death in Massachusetts. For communities like Winthrop, characterized by high residential density, limited tree

canopy, and an aging population,[1] such interventions are not optional amenities but essential public health protections.

The state's decision to deny this grant application is entirely inconsistent with the Commonwealth's commitment to proactive, preventive public health measures. Instead, it is an unlawful, punitive measure unaligned with the state administration's philosophy as stated by Governor Healey that, "playing politics with people's lives and their ability to feed their families, [is] absolutely unacceptable ."[2] Consider also AG Campbell's pronouncement that the federal government's withholding of funds to Massachusetts constitutes "a reckless abuse of power that harms the very working people and families he promised to protect."[3] Winthrop echoes that philosophy here.

I respectfully request that the EOEEA review the Town of Winthrop's denial, assess its alignment with the public health objectives of the Cooling Corridors Grant Program, and consider steps to ensure that residents are not excluded from life-saving climate adaptation resources. I also urge your office to provide a detailed written explanation of the denial and to immediately explore opportunities for reconsideration or alternative pathways for implementation.

I look forward to your response and guidance.

Sincerely,

James Letterie
Town Council President

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[1] State statistics show that forty-two percent of Winthrop's population is age fifty years or older.

[2] Gov. Healey press release, 11/4/2025, referring to President Trump's decision to allow SNAP funds to lapse.

3. AG Campbell statement, 1/28/2025, concerning federal government's action to block federal grants, loans, and financial assistance to Massachusetts. Withholding enjoined by court order when MA filed suit.