

# IN THE NEWS



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## **NOVEMBER REVENUE COMING IN STRONG SAYS DOR**

On November 20 the MA Department of Revenue (DOR) reported it brought in \$1.057 billion during the first half of November, a jump of \$306 million or nearly 41% compared to what came in during the same time period in November 2023. November usually generates about 6.5% of the annual state tax revenue haul. By the time this month ends, the Healey administration is counting on having collected \$2.382 billion in November. DOR reported it had already collected about 45% of that benchmark amount by the 15th. Fiscal 2024 tax revenues are running \$129 million or 1% below year-to-date benchmarks through the first four months of the budget year, ending with October. But year-to-date receipts are still ahead of actual collections during the same period in fiscal 2024 by \$667 million or 5.6%. Full November revenue numbers are due from DOR by Wednesday, Dec. 4.

## **UI TRUST FUND REPAYMENT ISSUE REMAINS**

In mid-March 2020 then-Governor Charlie Baker shut down schools and nonessential businesses as a deadly new coronavirus threatened the state. Within two months, 825,000 initial jobless claims were filed — nearly triple the number for all of the previous year. That April, [unemployment](#) hit a post-Great Depression record of 16.9%. COVID layoffs were temporary, but they forced employers to pay for jobless benefits through taxes - and are still paying back the state for more than \$2 billion in jobless benefits they couldn't make good on when their claims account ran out of money in 2020. Now, more than four-and-a-half years later, businesses are waiting to see what happens with the misdirection by the Baker administration of \$2.5 billion in federal funds for jobless benefits that should have been paid by employers. Reports indicate that the Governor may be unsuccessful in persuading the U.S. Labor Department to negate repayment of the misspent funds, leaving the state to pay them back, ultimately relying on employers or taxpayers' dollars to reimburse the federal government for the spending. Employers are responsible for the unemployment insurance (UI) trust fund that pays for jobless benefits with quarterly tax payments. Rates are based in part on each employer's history of contributions and claims. It remains to be seen how this money will be allocated and ultimately paid back.

## **GUIDANCE ON REUSABLE TAKEOUT CONTAINERS AVAILABLE**

[RecyclingWorks](#) in Massachusetts has published new guidance on reusable takeout containers. This guidance is for food service establishments seeking to reduce waste from single-use disposables by implementing reusable takeout containers, as well as health department officials, recycling coordinators, and other organizations focused on waste prevention and reusables. Visit the RecyclingWorks website to learn more: <https://recyclingworksma.com/reusable-containers-guidance/>.

## **GOVERNOR SIGNS COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BILL**

On November 20 Governor Healey signed into law comprehensive legislation ([H5100](#)) that commits about \$4 billion in spending and bonding, including life sciences, climate tech, small businesses and consumer protection. It also increases EV charging stations and gives oversight of them to the MA Division of Standards. It will also allow local wineries and breweries sales at agricultural events and farmers markets and expands the authority to hold a liquor license in the state to include not only citizens, but also any "qualified alien." [Click here](#) to read more about each section of the bill or contact the office.