

LETTERS | OLYMPIC AMBITIONS IN THE BAY STATE

# Bid to host Games presents a test, and an opportunity, on geographic literacy

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AS GEOGRAPHERS, we are following with great interest the public debate surrounding possible Olympic bids from the Bay State ([“Winter Olympics in Boston?: Sochi on the Charles,”](#) Editorial, March 2). After the Legislature created a special commission to explore the feasibility of hosting, many parties have weighed in on the advantages of Summer Games in 2024, Winter Games in 2026, or staying out of the process altogether.

Whatever the final outcome, what strikes us at this juncture is that many of the important questions are really geographic questions. Where would the venues be? Where would the athletes stay and where would they train? Where would visitors stay, and by what means would they travel into and within the region? Questions of security, economic impact, opportunity costs, climate, and post-Games land use are the kinds of questions that geographers ask every day.

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The discussion has already proved productive about how the geography of our region fits into the wider world. Meanwhile, the Legislature has an opportunity to take action that would prompt a similarly productive discussion about geography itself.

The Joint Committee on Education is considering a geography education bill, which would also create a special commission. The commission would include professionals from various levels of education and from sectors most directly affected by geographic literacy, such as green industries, public safety, and the growing field of geospatial technology.

Massachusetts has an opportunity to take a leadership role in reversing a decades-long decline in geographic literacy, and could help the current generation of Bay State students become role models of global engagement.

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