



# House of Representatives

General Assembly

**File No. 404**

January Session, 2025

Substitute House Bill No. 7059

*House of Representatives, April 1, 2025*

The Committee on Transportation reported through REP. BERGER-GIRVALO of the 111th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

***AN ACT STUDYING THE DANBURY BRANCH LINE OF THE METRO-NORTH COMMUTER RAILROAD AND CONCERNING THE CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1       Section 1. (*Effective from passage*) The Commissioner of Transportation  
2       shall study the feasibility of (1) operating hybrid trains on the Danbury  
3       branch line of the Metro-North Commuter Railroad, and (2) expanding  
4       the Danbury branch line to include the town of New Milford. Not later  
5       than February 1, 2026, the commissioner shall submit, in accordance  
6       with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, the results of  
7       such study and any recommendations to the joint standing committee  
8       of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to  
9       transportation.

10       Sec. 2. Section 13b-212b of the general statutes is repealed and the  
11       following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

12       (a) There is established a Connecticut Public Transportation Council

13 which shall consist of fifteen members, all of whom shall be (1) residents  
14 who regularly use the transportation services of the New Haven  
15 commuter railroad line which includes the New Canaan, Danbury and  
16 Waterbury branches of such line, (2) residents who regularly use the  
17 transportation services of the Shore Line East railroad line, (3) residents  
18 who regularly use the transportation services of the Hartford railroad  
19 line, or (4) residents who regularly use public transit services funded by  
20 the state. Members shall be appointed as follows: (A) The Governor shall  
21 appoint four members; (B) the president pro tempore of the Senate shall  
22 appoint two members, one of whom regularly uses public transit  
23 services funded by the state and one of whom regularly uses the  
24 transportation services of the New Haven railroad line; (C) the speaker  
25 of the House of Representatives shall appoint two members, one of  
26 whom regularly uses public transit services funded by the state and one  
27 of whom regularly uses the transportation services of the Hartford  
28 railroad line; (D) the majority leader of the Senate shall appoint one  
29 member; (E) the majority leader of the House of Representatives shall  
30 appoint one member; (F) the minority leader of the Senate shall appoint  
31 one member; (G) the minority leader of the House of Representatives  
32 shall appoint one member; (H) the chairpersons of the joint standing  
33 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters  
34 relating to transportation shall each appoint one member, one of whom  
35 regularly uses public transit services funded by the state and one of  
36 whom regularly uses the transportation services of the Shore Line East  
37 railroad line; and (I) the ranking members of said committee shall jointly  
38 appoint one member who regularly uses public transit services funded  
39 by the state. Each member shall serve for a term of four years. All initial  
40 appointments to the council shall be made by August 1, 2023, and initial  
41 members shall serve a four-year term commencing on August 1, 2023,  
42 except that any member appointed prior to July 1, 2023, to serve on the  
43 former Connecticut Commuter Rail Council and serving on June 30,  
44 2023, shall be deemed appointed to serve on the Connecticut Public  
45 Transportation Council and may continue to serve until the expiration  
46 of such member's term and a successor has qualified. Any vacancy shall  
47 be filled by the original appointing authority by appointment for the

48 unexpired portion of any term. Members of the council shall serve until  
49 their respective successors are appointed.

50 (b) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 4-9a, the members of  
51 the council shall choose one of the members of the council to be  
52 chairperson of the council. A majority of the members of the council  
53 then in office shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of any  
54 business, and action shall be by vote of a majority of the members  
55 present at a meeting. The council shall meet at least once during each  
56 calendar quarter and at such other times as the chairperson deems  
57 necessary or upon the request of a majority of the members in office.  
58 Special meetings shall be held at the request of such majority after notice  
59 in accordance with the provisions of section 1-225. Any member who  
60 fails to attend fifty per cent of all meetings held during any calendar  
61 year or who fails to attend three consecutive meetings shall be deemed  
62 to have resigned from office. Not later than ten days after a vacancy  
63 occurs in the council or the resignation of a member, the chairperson  
64 shall notify the appointing authority of such vacancy or resignation.

65 (c) The Department of Transportation shall maintain records of each  
66 request for information and data received from the council and denote  
67 the status of any such request.

68 (d) The council shall prepare its budget, if any, and submit its  
69 budgetary requests to the Department of Transportation and the  
70 department shall include the council's budgetary request in the  
71 department's estimate of expenditure requirements in accordance with  
72 the provisions of section 4-77.

73 (e) The Department of Transportation shall establish a separate  
74 Internet web page on the department's Internet web site for the council  
75 and include on such web page any information as submitted by the  
76 council. Such information shall include, but need not be limited to, the  
77 council's meeting schedule, agendas, minutes, reports and resources.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
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Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	13b-212b

**TRA**      *Joint Favorable Subst.*

*The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.*

## **OFA Fiscal Note**

### **State Impact:**

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
Transportation, Dept.	TF - Cost	\$2 million	None

Note: TF=Transportation Fund

### **Municipal Impact:** None

### **Explanation**

**Section 1** requires the Department of Transportation (DOT) to conduct a feasibility study on operating hybrid trains and expanding the Danbury branch rail line, as described in the bill, which is expected to result in a one-time cost of approximately \$2 million for consultant support.

**Section 2**, which is not expected to have a fiscal impact, requires DOT to establish a separate web page on the department's website for the Connecticut Public Transportation Council and to include the council's budget request, if any, in the department's estimate of expenditure requirements.

### **The Out Years**

None

**OLR Bill Analysis****sHB 7059*****AN ACT STUDYING THE DANBURY BRANCH LINE OF THE METRO-NORTH COMMUTER RAILROAD AND CONCERNING THE CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL.*****SUMMARY**

This bill requires the Department of Transportation (DOT) commissioner to study the feasibility of operating hybrid trains on Metro-North Railroad's Danbury Branch line and expanding it to include New Milford. The bill requires him to report the study's results and any recommendations to the Transportation Committee by February 1, 2026.

Separately, the bill requires the Connecticut Public Transportation Council to prepare its budget, if any, and submit budgetary requests to DOT. The department must include these requests in the estimate of needed expenditures that existing law requires budgeted agencies to biennially submit to the Office of Policy and Management and the legislature. The bill also requires DOT to create a separate webpage for the council on its website that includes the council's meeting schedule, agendas, minutes, reports, resources, and any other information the council submits.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except the transportation council provisions are effective July 1, 2025.

**BACKGROUND*****Connecticut Public Transportation Council***

By law, the 15-member Connecticut Public Transportation Council is charged with studying and investigating all aspects of the daily operation of commuter railroad systems and state-funded public transit services (e.g., bus transit), monitoring their performance, and

recommending changes to improve their efficiency, equity, and quality. The council serves as an advocate for customers of all commuter railroad systems and state-funded public transit services (CGS §§ 13b-212b & -212c).

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Transportation Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea    35    Nay   0    (03/12/2025)