

## **General Law Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT**

**Bill No.:** HB-5425

**Title:** AN ACT CONCERNING HERITAGE RAILWAYS AND ALCOHOLIC LIQUOR.

**Vote Date:** 3/12/2025

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 2/26/2025

**File No.:** LCO 5124

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### **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

General Law Committee  
Rep. John E. Piscopo, 76<sup>th</sup> Dist.  
Sen. Norman Needleman, 33<sup>rd</sup> Dist.  
Sen. Henri Martin, 31<sup>st</sup> Dist.  
Sen. Paul Cicarella, 34<sup>th</sup> Dist.

### **REASONS FOR BILL:**

This legislation would recognize and define "heritage railway" and allow these "heritage railways" to obtain a café permit to sell alcoholic liquor on the premises for a limited duration of time with reduced fees attached.

Representative Piscopo initially proposed this bill to help the New England Railroad Museum in Thomaston, which is in his district. This bill would help drive economic activity in Thomaston and surrounding towns by enhancing services the museum could offer to adult riders.

### **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

[Bryan Cafferelli, Commissioner, Department of Consumer Protection](#) made comments that this bill would be a more affordable alternative café permit for "heritage railways," which are tourist and cultural attractions. He notes that they are different from traditional "bar cars" found on Metro North. Due to these differences, Commissioner Cafferelli suggests moving the provision to another section. He also requests that the language at line 120 allowing for reapplication after permit revocation be removed so that the new permit aligns with all other liquor permits in the state.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

[Rep. John Piscopo, 76<sup>th</sup> Dist., State Representative, Connecticut General Assembly](#) supports this bill, stating that it would benefit the New England Railroad Museum in Thomaston. It is a tourist attraction, and an economic driver for the towns and businesses that surround it. Making these permits affordable would add another element to the experience that this Railroad Museum can provide to its visitors.

[Orion Newall, Naugatuck Railroad Co.](#) supports this bill due to the stress that the significant increase in cost to renew liquor permits has on businesses with low liquor volume. He expresses displeasure at having to cover the expenses by promoting liquor sales and raising costs of alcoholic beverages and tickets to tasting events. His goal is to work with local liquor brands and breweries at an affordable price while promoting Connecticut history within the historical railcars.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None expressed.

**Reported by: Nicole Chambrello**

**Date: 3/13/2025**