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## **OLR Bill Analysis**

### **sHB 5462**

#### ***AN ACT CONCERNING NOISE POLLUTION.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill increases the fine, from \$150 per offense to \$1,000 per offense, for violating certain requirements under existing law related to motor vehicle mechanical equipment, primarily involving mufflers and exhaust pipes (§ 2). As under existing law, these violations are (1) processed through the Centralized Infractions Bureau (CIB, see BACKGROUND) and (2) subject to a Special Transportation Fund surcharge of 50% of the fine (CGS § 13b-70).

Separately, the bill requires the Department of Transportation commissioner to create a solar photovoltaic noise barrier pilot program to evaluate the feasibility, cost effectiveness, environmental benefits, and effectiveness of using noise barriers with this technology along state roads (§ 1). (These are generally noise barriers designed to both generate electricity and lessen road noise.) Under the bill, the program must include designing, installing, operating, maintaining, and evaluating between one and three of these noise barriers, which may be done with third-party entities. The commissioner must consult with the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority on electric interconnection and net metering eligibility.

By January 1, 2028, the commissioner must give a report on the pilot program to the Transportation Committee that includes (1) information on its total costs; electricity generation data; maintenance and performance, safety, and structural findings; and environmental impacts and (2) any recommendations for continuing, expanding, or modifying the program.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

## **EQUIPMENT VIOLATIONS SUBJECT TO INCREASED FINE**

The motor vehicle equipment offenses subject to the increased fine generally include the following:

1. operating, constructing, equipping, or adjusting a motor vehicle (or its devices) to cause unnecessary or unusual noise;
2. operating a motor vehicle with an improper muffler; failing to maintain a muffler in good working order; installing or using a muffler without interior baffle plates or other effective muffling devices, a gutted muffler, a muffler cutout, or a straight exhaust; installing or using a mechanical device that amplifies the vehicle's emitted noise; removing or replacing all or part of a muffler except to repair or replace it; or using an extension or device on an exhaust system or tail pipe that will cause excessive or unusual noise;
3. operating a motor vehicle that emits excessive fumes or exhaust smoke;
4. violating requirements for constructing, placing, or positioning exhaust pipes on a motor vehicle;
5. operating a motor vehicle with a defective horn; and
6. operating a warning siren, whistle, or bell on a motor vehicle except as the law allows.

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Centralized Infractions Bureau***

By law, individuals charged with a motor vehicle violation may, generally, pay the fine through CIB without appearing in court. Payment is considered a plea of nolo contendere (no contest) and is not admissible in any civil or criminal proceeding. If an individual pleads not guilty, CIB must send the plea and request for trial to the clerk of the geographical area court where the trial is to take place. The practice, procedure, rules of evidence, and burden of proof applicable in criminal proceedings apply in the trial (CGS § 51-164n).

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Transportation Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 30 Nay 6 (03/16/2026)