OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5464 (as amended by House "A," "B," "E" and "F")*

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND ESTABLISHING A PILOT PROGRAM TO OPERATE AUTOMATED TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT SAFETY DEVICES ON LIMITED ACCESS HIGHWAYS.

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Requires 90%, rather than 100%, of school buses to be zero-emission by 2040 and sets an interim deadline for distressed municipalities; eliminates the requirement that environmental justice communities fully transition to zero-emission school buses by 2030; requires municipalities to submit plans outlining how they will meet the zero-emission requirements; modifies zero-emission school bus grant program requirements, including broadening its purposes beyond providing matching funds for federal grant applications; requires schools to implement safety plans before using a zero-emission school bus

§ 25 — FREIGHT RAIL, SEA LANES, AND PORTS WORKING GROUP

Requires the CPA executive director, or his designee, to convene a working group to study, among other things, policies to encourage the use of freight rail, sea lanes, and ports to transport goods in the state

§§ 26 & 27 — DOT ENCAMPMENT REMOVALS

Establishes a notice requirement applicable to DOT's (or their agents' or contractors') removal of certain encampments located on a state highway right-of-way; requires the DOT and DMHAS commissioners to study and make recommendations on best practices and standards related to these encampments

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Eliminates the fee for issuing or renewing a marine pilot license (currently $105.48 annually)

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Updates and reorganizes the distracted driving law to reflect current device and vehicle technology and how it is used; generally prohibits driving while a video is visible to the driver in the normal driving position, regardless of the technology used to play the video; prohibits holding or supporting a mobile electronic device with any part of the body while driving and failing to maintain a proper lookout

§ 35 — TASK FORCE ON PARKING CHALLENGES FOR HOME HEALTH AGENCIES

Creates a task force to study and make recommendations to the Transportation Committee on parking access challenges for home health agencies delivering services in residential settings

§ 36 — DEEP WORKING GROUP ON SCHOOL BUS ALTERNATIVE FUELS AND TECHNOLOGIES

Requires the DEEP commissioner to create a working group to evaluate and make recommendations on Connecticut school bus fleets' increased use of alternative fuels and technologies

SUMMARY

This bill makes various changes in transportation-related laws. It also makes minor, technical, and conforming changes. A section-by-section analysis follows.

*House Amendment "A" among other things, modifies the data retention requirements applicable to flex lane control systems, eliminates provisions allowing the Department of Transportation (DOT) to create a speed camera pilot program on limited access highways, and adds to the underlying bill provisions related to (1) registering certain air navigation facilities, (2) DOT's vegetation management guidelines and a UConn carbon sequestration study, (3) rider safety and nondiscrimination requirements for transportation network companies, (4) a traffic signal grant program, (5) transitioning to zero-emission school buses, (6) a new working group on freight rail and ports, (7) DOT encampment removals, (8) marine pilot license fees, (9) increased fines for violating certain motor vehicle equipment requirements, (10) the

distracted driving law, (11) a task force on parking access challenges for home health agencies, and (12) a working group on school bus alternative fuels and technologies.

*House Amendment "B" removes the provisions on registering certain air navigation facilities.

*House Amendment "E" reduces, from $1,000 per offense to $300 per offense, the bill's increased fines for violating certain motor vehicle equipment requirements.

*House Amendment "F" adds the provision on the zero-emission school bus safety plan requirement.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Various, see below.

§ 1 — DIESEL-FUELED TRANSIT BUSES

Allows the state to procure, purchase, or lease diesel-fueled transit buses by eliminating a prohibition on doing so that began January 1, 2024; existing law, unchanged by the bill, generally requires at least 30% of state-purchased or -leased buses to be zero-emission buses on and after January 1, 2030

The bill allows the state to procure, purchase, or lease diesel-fueled transit buses by eliminating a prohibition against it doing so that began January 1, 2024. Existing law, unchanged by the bill, requires at least 30% of state-purchased or -leased buses to be zero-emission buses on and after January 1, 2030, with certain exceptions (such as emergency vehicles and buses or vans that transport people in wheelchairs).

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 2 — STATE AGENCY EV CHARGING STATION PARKING SPOTS

Allows plug-in hybrid and battery EVs to be parked in spots with state agency EV charging stations while not actively charging, at the discretion of the state agency that designated the charging station as available for public use

The bill allows plug-in hybrid and battery EVs to be parked in spots with state agency EV charging stations while not actively charging, at the discretion of the state agency that designated the charging station as available for public use. Current law prohibits parking in these spots unless the vehicle is charging and violations are generally infractions.

By law, state agencies may designate their EV charging stations as available for public use, only state employees, or a combination of both.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 3 — EV CHARGING STATIONS AT CERTAIN NEW STATE FACILITIES

Changes the EV charging station requirement for new state facilities that cost over $100,000 by generally requiring that 8% of these facilities' car parking spaces are capable of supporting future charging implementation, rather than requiring that 20% of certain parking spaces are installed with level two EV charging stations; requires certain commissioners to periodically make recommendations on revising the EV charging station requirement

The bill changes the EV charging station requirement for new state facilities projected to cost more than $100,000 by requiring, starting on July 1, 2026, these facilities to be constructed so that at least 8% of their designated car parking spaces are EV capable parking spaces (if the facility will have public parking). "EV capable parking spaces" are those with equipment installed during construction to support future implementation of charging, including the conduits and electrical panel space needed for installing an EV charging station.

Current law instead requires new state facilities with total costs above $100,000 to have level two EV charging stations installed in at least 20% of parking spaces designated for cars or light-duty trucks. (Level two EV charging stations must supply 208- to 240-volt alternating current.)

Beginning by January 1, 2029, and then every three years, the bill requires the transportation, administrative services, and energy and environmental protection commissioners to jointly submit recommendations on the bill's EV capable parking space requirement to the Environment, Government Administration and Elections, and Transportation committees. These recommendations must propose an appropriate requirement for future EV charging infrastructure at new state facilities based on the:

1. current public prevalence of EVs and market conditions for buying them;

2. expected future growth in EV ownership by state employees and

the public;

3. current and future use of EV charging spaces at state facilities;

4. similar requirements for new construction in neighboring states and nationally recognized model building codes; and

5. state goals for reducing transportation sector pollution, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 4 — PORT EASTSIDE INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Eliminates a provision that exempts district improvements in East Hartford's Port Eastside Infrastructure Improvement District from specified traffic control and highway safety laws

PA 25-90 authorizes East Hartford's Port Eastside Infrastructure Improvement district as a special taxing district to provide services and finance infrastructure improvements within the district. Among other things, it (1) sets an expedited process for state agency administrative actions, permit issuances, and approvals related to specified infrastructure improvements ("district improvements") for the Port Eastside district that supersedes all statutory requirements for these approvals and (2) exempts these improvements from specified traffic control and highway safety laws.

The bill eliminates the traffic control and highway safety-related exemptions for district improvements, which, under current law, include exemptions from laws:

1. requiring major traffic-generating developments to get a certificate of operation from the Office of the State Traffic Administration (OSTA);

2. authorizing OSTA and local traffic authorities to require traffic controls for access to and from specified parking areas or commercial establishments with an entrance or exit on or near a state or local road, as applicable;

3. establishing a 60-day timeframe for DOT and OSTA to make a final determination on economic development project petitions, applications, or requests;

4. authorizing traffic authorities to make and enforce temporary regulations to cover emergencies and special conditions;

5. allowing anyone aggrieved by a traffic authority's order or regulation under the traffic control and highway safety laws to appeal it;

6. setting penalties for failing to comply with traffic control and safety orders and damaging or removing traffic control devices, signs, or lights;

7. requiring OSTA, if requested, to put up special warning signs near the residences of children who are deaf; and

8. allowing OSTA or a local traffic authority to designate locations on roads within their respective jurisdictions at which signs saying "State Law Requires Use of Signal Lights When Changing Lanes" may be put up.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§§ 5-11 & 13 — DYNAMIC PART-TIME LANES (FLEX LANES)

Authorizes OSTA to temporarily designate any highway lane or shoulder as a "flex lane" for certain uses and sets restrictions on motor vehicle operation in a designated flex lane; allows (1) DOT to establish a program to enforce these restrictions with automated flex lane control systems and (2) municipalities meeting certain requirements to participate in this program; sets various requirements and procedures for control system operation, violation enforcement, and data collection and retention

The bill authorizes OSTA to temporarily designate any highway (public road) lane or shoulder for certain specified uses to control and manage traffic (a "dynamic part-time lane," also known as a flex lane), including (1) as a high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane, dedicated lane for bus rapid transit or other motor or service bus use, or dedicated lane for authorized emergency vehicles responding to an emergency call; (2) to redirect an opposing highway lane into a one-way lane; or (3) as needed to maintain the function of the state's highway system. The bill allows

OSTA to adopt implementing regulations.

Relatedly, it sets restrictions on motor vehicle operation in flex lanes and allows (1) DOT to establish a program to operate flex lane control systems (automated enforcement systems) and (2) municipalities meeting certain requirements to participate in this program.

The bill also sets various conditions, requirements, and procedures for operating a flex lane control system, issuing tickets and enforcing violations, and collecting and retaining data. Generally, this framework is similar to provisions in existing law governing DOT's work zone speed camera program (CGS § 13a-261 et seq.).

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2027, except the provision applying Centralized Infractions Bureau (CIB) procedures to violations is effective October 1, 2026.

Motor Vehicle Operation Restrictions in Designated Flex Lanes (§ 6)

The bill restricts motor vehicle operation in OSTA-designated flex lanes (sets "flex lane restrictions") as follows:

1. flex HOV lanes are limited to (a) traveling with at least one passenger or (b) operating a blood transport vehicle to transport human blood and blood products between a collection point and a hospital or storage center according to existing law's requirements;

2. flex lanes dedicated to bus rapid transit or other bus use are limited to (a) operators or passengers in state-authorized public transit vehicles, authorized emergency vehicles responding to an emergency, vehicles operated by DOT or a DOT contractor authorized to maintain the roadway, or motor vehicles the DOT commissioner specifically allows in writing to enter or travel on these lanes or (b) motor vehicle operators directed to stop or park by a law enforcement officer or "official traffic control device" (generally meaning lawfully placed signs, signals, markings, and devices that regulate, warn, or guide traffic);

3. flex lanes dedicated for authorized emergency vehicles responding to an emergency are limited to these operators or motor vehicle operators obeying a law enforcement officer's direction; and

4. flex lanes dedicated for redirecting an opposing highway lane into a one-way lane or maintaining the function of the state's highway system are limited to motor vehicle operators obeying an official traffic control device or law enforcement officer's direction.

Flex Lane Control Systems (§§ 5, 7 & 10)

The bill allows DOT to establish a program to operate flex lane control systems, which are devices with one or more sensors connected to a camera system that can produce images indicating the date, time, and location that a motor vehicle allegedly violated the bill's flex lane restrictions (or a related municipal ordinance).

It also allows any municipality operating a bus in a flex lane to participate in DOT's flex lane control system program if it adopts an ordinance meeting certain requirements, for example, specifying that a motor vehicle owner violates the ordinance if his or her vehicle is captured violating the bill's flex lane restrictions by a flex lane control system that DOT operates on the municipality's behalf. The municipality must also enter into an agreement with DOT for flex lane control system design, installation, operation, and maintenance. The bill specifies that no person may be subject, for the same offense, to both a fine for violating a municipal ordinance and a fine for violating the bill's flex lane restrictions.

The bill places various conditions and requirements on flex lane control system operation, including that:

1. control systems must be operated by someone trained and certified to do so (a "dynamic part-time lane control system operator");

2. control systems may only record images of motor vehicles

allegedly operating in violation of the bill's flex lane restrictions or a related municipal ordinance, and the images may not be used for surveillance;

3. drivers must be given notice through signs and DOT's website; and

4. control system operators must meet certain training, record keeping, and system testing requirements.

The bill also allows the DOT commissioner to (1) adopt implementing regulations and (2) establish standards and procedures for flex lanes and their control systems.

Notice Requirements. For a flex lane with a control system, the bill requires (1) at least two conspicuous road signs to be placed at a reasonable distance before the flex lane and (2) an appropriate sign to be conspicuously placed at its end point if it has an operational control system. The signs ahead of the flex lane must be placed in accordance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), as approved and revised by OSTA, and the first one must indicate why OSTA designated the flex lane and the second must indicate whether or not the control system is operating.

The bill also requires DOT to post a notice identifying the locations of flex lane control systems on its website.

Vendors and Contracts. The bill allows DOT to (1) enter into agreements with vendors for flex lane control system design, operation, maintenance, or a combination of them, and (2) retain and employ consultants and assistants by contract or another basis for legal, financial, professional, technical, or other services necessary for control system design, operation, and maintenance. If a vendor provides, deploys, or operates a control system, the vendor's fee may not be contingent on the number of violations issued or fines paid under the bill (including under a municipal ordinance).

A "vendor" is someone who (1) provides flex lane control system-

related services; (2) operates, maintains, leases, or licenses a control system; or (3) reviews and assembles the images the control system records.

Training and Record Keeping. The bill requires flex lane control system operators to complete training from the system's manufacturer, or the manufacturer's representative, on the procedures for setting up, testing, and operating the system. The training must also cover any devices critical to a system's operation. Upon training completion, the manufacturer or its representative must issue a signed certificate to the operator.

Flex lane control system operators must complete and sign a daily log for the control system that (1) states the date, time, and location of its setup; (2) states that they successfully performed, and the control system passed, the testing specified by the manufacturer; and (3) must be kept on file at the operator's principal office.

The bill also requires flex lane control systems to have an annual calibration check done at a calibration laboratory. The laboratory must issue a signed certificate of calibration after the check, which must be kept on file.

Under the bill, the operator training certificates, control system daily logs, and certificates of calibration discussed above must be admitted as evidence in any (1) court proceeding for a violation of the bill's flex lane restrictions or (2) municipal citation hearing procedure for a violation of a municipal ordinance, as applicable.

Ticket Issuance and Processing (§§ 7, 8 & 13)

When a flex lane control system detects and produces images of a vehicle allegedly violating the bill's flex lane restrictions or a related municipal ordinance, a (1) sworn or authorized member of the State Police or (2) sworn member or employee of the municipality's police department or traffic authority-designated municipal employee, as applicable, must review the images. If, upon review, the member or employee determines there are reasonable grounds to believe a violation

occurred, he or she may issue a written violation notice. The notice must be sworn or affirmed by the member or employee and treated as prima facie evidence of the facts in it.

Under the bill, the notice must include:

1. a copy of the image showing the vehicle and its license plate;
2. the vehicle's registration number and issuing state;
3. the dates of the most recent calibration check and inspection and written verification that the control system was operating correctly during the alleged violation; and
4. the date, time, and location of the alleged violation.

For vehicles registered in Connecticut, the bill requires the violation notice to be sent by first class mail to the address on file with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) within 30 days after the alleged violation occurred or the vehicle owner's identity is ascertained, whichever is later. For vehicles registered elsewhere, the notice must be similarly sent to the address on file with the issuing jurisdiction within 30 days after ascertaining the owner's identity. However, the bill makes notices of violation invalid if they are mailed later than 90 days after an alleged violation. Manual or automatic records of mailing prepared by the flex lane control system operator in the ordinary course of business are prima facie evidence of mailing and are admissible in any court proceeding as to facts the notice contains.

The bill requires DMV to provide DOT and any vendor with information on owners of vehicles captured allegedly violating the bill's flex lane restrictions or a related municipal ordinance, including the (1) vehicle's make and license plate number and (2) owner's name and address.

Under the bill, owners who receive violation notices must generally follow CIB procedures for mail-in violations (see *Background — Centralized Infractions Bureau*). However, this does not apply to violation notices issued under a municipal ordinance.

Enforcement and Penalties (§§ 6-8 & 10)

Under the bill, owners of motor vehicles that a control system captures violating the flex lane restrictions discussed above must be fined (1) $75 for a first violation and (2) up to $200 for a subsequent violation that happens within one year of their most recent violation (subsequent violations that happen after this period are treated as a first violation). The owner is liable for the fine unless the driver received a citation from a law enforcement officer when the violation occurred. For motor vehicles leased for more than 30 days, the lessee is considered the owner.

All fine revenue must be deposited into the Special Transportation Fund, except any revenue from fines imposed under a municipal ordinance must be deposited into the municipality's general fund or a municipally designated special fund. (These municipal ordinances cannot set fines in excess of those described above.)

The bill prohibits flex lane violations (including under a municipal ordinance) from being (1) included in the driver's driving control record (driver history), (2) the subject of merit rating for insurance purposes, or (3) used to impose surcharge points for auto insurance coverage.

It makes the following two defenses specifically available to owners of vehicles captured allegedly violating the bill's flex lane restrictions:

1. the violation happened during a time when the vehicle was reported stolen to law enforcement and had not yet been recovered or

2. the control system used did not comply with the bill's requirements on accuracy testing, certification, or calibration.

If a vehicle owner fails to (1) pay the fine imposed for a violation (or conviction) of the bill's flex lane restrictions; (2) submit a not guilty plea by the answer date; or (3) appear for a scheduled court appearance, DMV may refuse to register the vehicle or suspend its registration. (This provision does not apply to violations of a municipal ordinance.)

Privacy (§§ 5 & 9)

The bill prohibits DOT, municipalities, and vendors from selling or disclosing "personally identifiable information" to any person or entity unless the disclosure is made in connection with charging, collecting, and enforcing fines imposed for violations of the bill's flex lane restrictions or a related municipal ordinance. It also (1) prohibits DOT, municipalities, and vendors from storing or keeping this information unless it is needed to collect and enforce these fines and (2) exempts this information from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.

Under the bill, "personally identifiable information" is information DOT, a municipality, or a vendor creates or maintains that identifies or describes a vehicle owner and includes the owner's address; phone number; license plate; photo; bank account information; credit card or debit card number; or the date, time, location, or direction of travel on a highway.

The bill requires DOT, municipalities, and vendors to destroy personally identifiable information and other data specifically identifying a motor vehicle and relating to an alleged violation within 30 days after a (1) fine is imposed or (2) trial or hearing is resolved, whichever is later. However, it allows these entities to retain a portion of personally identifiable information for determining subsequent violations but requires that they destroy this information within one year after someone's most recent violation.

Municipal Participation in Flex Lane Control System Program (§§ 10 & 11)

Under the bill, a participating municipality's ordinance must specify the following:

1. a motor vehicle owner violates the ordinance if his or her vehicle is captured violating the bill's flex lane restrictions by a flex lane control system that DOT operates on the municipality's behalf;

2. a fine, if any, for an owner of a motor vehicle that violates the ordinance, which (a) cannot exceed the fine amounts the bill establishes for first and subsequent violations of flex lane

restrictions and (b) must treat subsequent violations as a first violation if they happen more than one year after an owner's most recent violation;

3. fines may be paid electronically; and

4. the defenses available to owners of vehicles captured allegedly violating the ordinance, which must at least include those described above.

Citation Hearing Procedure. The bill requires any municipality that adopts an ordinance to also adopt, for alleged ordinance violations, a municipal citation hearing procedure meeting requirements set in existing law.

Existing law allows municipalities to establish by ordinance a hearing procedure for citations they issue and authorizes the Superior Court to enforce fines and judgements imposed through the citation hearing procedure. Among other things, the law generally requires (1) the municipal chief executive officer to appoint citation hearing officers, (2) municipalities to inform the person to whom a citation was issued of his or her right to contest the citation at a hearing, (3) the issuing police officer or official to attend the hearing if the violator requests it, and (4) the hearing officer to conduct the hearing in the manner and with methods of proof he or she deems fair and appropriate. The law also allows people found liable for a penalty through the citation hearing procedure to appeal to the Superior Court. The bill extends these provisions to citations issued under a municipal ordinance authorizing participation in DOT's flex lane control system program.

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).

Related Bills. sHB 5449 (File 536), reported favorably by the Judiciary Committee, generally restricts law enforcement agencies and other public agencies from using automated license plate reader (ALPR) systems or ALPR data, except for certain listed reasons. Among other things, the bill generally allows these entities to keep ALPR data for only 30 days.

sHB 5552 (File 555), reported favorably by the Government Administration and Elections Committee, prohibits public agencies, starting October 1, 2026, from entering into or renewing any contract with a vendor that does not prohibit the vendor from engaging in certain activities related to ALPR information gathered in the state.

sSB 397 (File 399, as amended by Senate "A" and "B"), reported favorably by the Judiciary Committee and passed by the Senate, sets various conditions and restrictions on how law enforcement agencies and other public agencies may use ALPR systems or associated data, including generally setting a 21-day limit on how long agencies can keep this data. The bill allows public agencies or their private vendors to keep ALPR data for more than 21 days if it may be necessary to establish that a potential future offense, motor vehicle violation, or infraction (under an ordinance, statute, or regulation) is a subsequent one with a higher penalty than the previous one.

§ 12 — GOVERNOR'S TRAVEL RESTRICTION ORDERS

Increases the penalty for violating a governor-issued travel restriction order, from an infraction to a fine of up to $250

The bill increases the fine for violating a governor-issued travel restriction order to a maximum of $250. Under current law, violators are subject to an infraction, which is a $50 fine according to the current, October 2025 version of the Superior Court's Schedule of Fines. Under the bill, these violations are still processed through CIB (see *Background* above).

By law, whenever extreme weather conditions or other acts of nature cause an emergency situation that requires restricting the use of state streets and highways, the governor may generally issue an order restricting the people and vehicles allowed to use them and specifying the routes they must follow.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§§ 14 & 37 — ROAD AND BRIDGE NAMING

Names a portion of Route 163 in Montville the "Kevin Ryan Memorial Highway"; repeals a duplicative bridge naming in Newington

The bill names a portion of Route 163, between the intersection of Route 32 traveling in a northwesterly direction to the intersection of Route 82 in Montville, the "Kevin Ryan Memorial Highway."

It also repeals a duplicative bridge naming in Newington.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§§ 15 & 16 — UCONN STUDY AND DOT VEGETATION MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Delays the due date for a UConn final report on its carbon sequestration study and requires it to also submit the study results and related recommendations to DOT; requires the DOT commissioner to consider the results of UConn's study and determine whether DOT's vegetation management guidelines need to be accordingly revised

The bill delays, from July 1, 2025, to October 1, 2026, the due date for the UConn Department of Natural Resources and the Environment's final report on its study of carbon sequestration by trees and other vegetation along highways and other areas in Connecticut. (Under existing law, its interim report was due by January 1, 2025, but, in practice, the department published that report on February 1, 2026.) Along with the final report, the bill also requires the UConn department to submit its study results and any related recommendations to DOT, which is in addition to the Transportation and Environment committees as existing law requires.

Relatedly, the bill requires the DOT commissioner, by February 1, 2027, to consider the results of UConn's study and determine whether DOT's vegetation management guidelines need to be accordingly

revised. If the commissioner determines that the guidelines do not need to be revised, he must report to the Transportation and Environment committees explaining why. Alternatively, if he revises the guidelines based on UConn's study, he must submit them to these legislative committees and the committees may hold a joint public hearing for the commissioner to present on the revised guidelines.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026, except the provisions related to UConn's study are effective July 1, 2026.

Background

DOT Vegetation Management Guidelines. Existing law requires DOT to develop, and revise as necessary, guidelines on tree and vegetation management, removal, and replacement along state highways for its employees and contractors to use for maintenance and construction projects. The guidelines must include certain components and aim to ensure that maintenance and construction projects' impacts on the environment, landscape, and noise pollution are balanced or outweighed by measures taken to avoid and minimize them. The guidelines apply to construction projects financed, wholly or partially, with federal funds to the extent that they do not conflict with federal laws and regulations. They do not apply to tree or vegetation removal that is (1) needed to maintain public safety or (2) due to a weather-related civil preparedness emergency.

Related Bill. sSB 414 (File 359), reported favorably by the Transportation Committee, has substantially similar provisions.

§§ 17-21 — RIDER SAFETY AND NONDISCRIMINATION REQUIREMENTS FOR TNCS

Requires TNCs (such as Uber and Lyft) to implement certain additional rider and driver safety measures; increases the frequency of criminal history records checks for TNC drivers; and requires TNCs to adopt a service animal nondiscrimination policy

The bill makes changes in laws on Transportation Network Companies (TNCs, such as Uber and Lyft; see below) by generally requiring them to implement certain additional rider and driver safety measures. Among other things, the bill (1) requires TNCs to provide certain safety features to riders and notify them about these features; (2)

increases the frequency of criminal history records checks for TNC drivers; and (3) requires TNCs, when TNC drivers are offered a prearranged ride, to demarcate on the offer whether the requesting rider is verified by the company.

The bill also requires TNCs to (1) adopt, maintain, and enforce a service animal nondiscrimination policy meeting certain requirements and (2) provide an annual training on sexual assault prevention and driver education, which they must require each TNC driver to complete. The training must include information on preventing, identifying, and reporting sexual assault and instruction on appropriate interactions with riders.

Additionally, the bill delays, from January 1, 2026, to February 1, 2027, the date by which Connecticut-registered TNCs must begin to annually report certain aggregate data to the transportation commissioner (the average fare collected from TNC riders, the total time TNC drivers spent giving prearranged rides, and the total compensation paid to drivers for these rides).

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2027, except the provisions on TNC nondiscrimination policies are effective October 1, 2026.

Transportation Network Companies

By law, unchanged by the bill, TNCs are business entities that operate in Connecticut and use a digital network (generally an online-enabled application, website, or system) to connect TNC riders to TNC drivers for prearranged rides. (They do not include taxicab certificate or livery permit holders.) TNC drivers are not TNC employees and use vehicles meeting certain requirements to provide these rides while connected to a digital network. A "prearranged ride" is one that starts when a TNC driver accepts a ride request through the digital network and ends when the rider exits the vehicle.

Rider Safety Requirements

Notice of Required Safety Features. After a potential TNC rider requests a prearranged ride, the bill requires TNCs, through their digital

networks, to notify the rider about any available safety features that can be used during the ride. The bill requires TNCs to at least have the following features:

1. location sharing allowing a rider to share information about the ride with a third party;

2. an emergency assistance interface or other way to contact a public safety answering point;

3. optional audio recording, which must notify the driver when in use and comply with applicable state and federal laws on recording communications; and

4. available 24-hour support and resources for managing any ride-related incidents, accidents, or emergencies.

Under the bill and existing law, a "public safety answering point" is generally a facility that receives 9-1-1 calls and dispatches emergency response services or transfers calls to other public safety agencies.

Telemetric Monitoring. The bill requires TNCs, through their digital networks, to (1) have a telemetric monitoring system capable of providing an emergency assistance interface (see above) and (2) allow a third party, through an agreement with the company, to receive, review, and respond in real time to digital network-generated verified safety requests related to safety anomalies occurring during a prearranged ride.

Under the bill, "telemetric monitoring" is the continuous, automated collection and evaluation of operational and system performance data that a digital network generates during a ride. A "safety anomaly" is generally an unexpected event, detected by a digital network, that deviates from a TNC's performance baselines and may indicate a potential safety risk for a driver or rider (for example, indications of a vehicle accident, departure from the prearranged ride path, or prolonged period of inactivity on the digital network).

Driver Identity Verification, Background Checks, and Bans. Existing law prohibits TNCs from allowing someone to work as a TNC driver for various reasons, such as certain motor vehicle violations and offenses or their inclusion on a state or national sex offender registry. The bill adds to this list failure to submit periodic identity verification when a TNC requests it through the digital network and the driver is connected to, and active on, the network.

The bill increases the frequency of the criminal history records checks TNCs must conduct for each person permitted to drive for the company, to annually rather than every three years as current law requires.

Additionally, the bill requires TNCs to notify (or cause to be notified) each Connecticut-registered TNC within five days after completing an investigation resulting in the permanent ban of a driver's access to the company's digital network due to a sexual assault or assault resulting in another person's death connected with the driver's digital network use. Under the bill, this notice must include the driver's first and last name, birthdate, and driver's license number. By law and under the bill, a "sexual assault" includes 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th degree sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault, or sexual assault with a firearm.

Rider Identity Verification

Under the bill, when drivers are offered a prearranged ride, the TNC must demarcate on the offer whether the requesting rider (or third party requesting the ride on their behalf) is verified by the company. A TNC must designate someone as verified if the company has authenticated their identity using certain means (submission of a valid photograph, comparison of the person's account with records another party maintains, or any other method that reasonably allows the company to confirm their identity).

The bill specifies that if a driver declines a ride offer for someone who is unverified, this does not alone give the TNC grounds to take disciplinary action against the driver, including suspension or deactivation (restricting their access to the digital network).

Nondiscrimination Policies

Existing law requires each TNC to (1) adopt a broad policy of nondiscrimination (based, for example, on riders' and drivers' destination, age, race or ethnicity, religion, disability status, sex or gender identity, or sexual orientation) and (2) notify all TNC drivers using a company's digital network about the policy. The bill specifies that TNCs must maintain and enforce their policies and requires each of them to also adopt, maintain, and enforce a service animal nondiscrimination policy, which must at least do the following:

1. prohibit drivers from cancelling or refusing prearranged rides based on the potential rider being accompanied by a service animal, regardless of an allergy, fear, or religious or cultural objection to the animal;

2. require the TNC, through its digital network, to (a) display an option for a potential rider to disclose that he or she is accompanied by a service animal and report when a driver cancels or refuses to provide a prearranged ride in violation of applicable laws on accommodating service animals and the company's service animal nondiscrimination policy; (b) notify a driver who attempts to cancel or refuse a prearranged ride with a rider who has disclosed he or she is accompanied by a service animal that doing so may violate the service animal laws and company policy and may result in a permanent ban from accessing the company's digital network; and (c) give drivers with an active account on the digital network periodic reminders about the rights of riders with disabilities and the applicability of laws on accommodating service animals;

3. require the TNC to (a) investigate and respond to each report of a driver canceling or refusing a prearranged ride based on the rider being accompanied by a service animal and (b) maintain records of these reports and the company's investigation and response for at least three years from the date of the reported cancellation or refusal; and

4. require the TNC to permanently ban drivers who violate the company's service animal nondiscrimination policy from accessing its digital network.

By law, TNC drivers must (1) comply with all applicable laws related to accommodating service animals and (2) accommodate service animals at no additional charge.

Background — Related Bill

sSB 415 (File 467), reported favorably by the Transportation Committee, has similar provisions.

§§ 22 & 23 — TRAFFIC SIGNAL GRANT PROGRAM

Requires DOT to give priority under the traffic signal modernization grant program to projects located in heavily congested areas, rather than to grant applications submitted by two or more municipalities

Existing law requires the Department of Transportation (DOT) commissioner to establish a matching grant program to help municipalities modernize their traffic signal equipment and operations to make them responsive to congestion and to reduce idling. It also earmarks $75 million from a DOT bond authorization for a matching grant to modernize existing traffic signal equipment and operations.

Under current law, DOT must give preference to grant applications submitted by, and create incentives for projects implemented by, two or more municipalities. The bill instead requires DOT to give priority to projects located in heavily congested areas.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026, except the changes to the traffic signal grant program (§ 22) are effective October 1, 2026.

Background — Related Bill

sSB 416 (File 468), §§ 1 & 2, favorably reported by the Transportation Committee, contains identical provisions.

§§ 24 & 38 — ZERO-EMISSION SCHOOL BUSES

Requires 90%, rather than 100%, of school buses to be zero-emission by 2040 and sets an interim deadline for distressed municipalities; eliminates the requirement that environmental justice communities fully transition to zero-emission school buses by 2030; requires municipalities to submit plans outlining how they will meet the zero-emission requirements; modifies zero-emission school bus grant program requirements, including broadening its purposes beyond providing matching funds for federal grant applications; requires schools to implement safety plans before using a zero-emission school bus

Deadline Extensions

Existing law requires school districts to gradually transition to zero-emission school buses (see BACKGROUND) and sets deadlines for doing so. By law, a zero-emission school bus is a school bus certified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as having a drivetrain that does not produce any exhaust emission of any EPA-listed air pollutant or greenhouse gas under any possible operational mode or condition (42 U.S.C. § 16091(a)(8)).

Under current law, 100% of school buses that provide transportation for school districts in the state must be (1) either zero-emission or alternative-fuel (such as natural gas or propane) by January 1, 2035, and (2) zero-emission only by January 1, 2040. The bill:

1. eliminates the 2035 requirement;

2. lowers the percentage of buses in each district that must be zero-emission in 2040 to 90%; and

3. extends the deadline to July, rather than January in the same year, aligning with the legal school year (July 1 to June 30 of the following year).

Requirement in Environmental Justice Communities and Distressed Municipalities. Current law sets an earlier deadline for some school districts, requiring that 100% of buses providing transportation for school districts located in or containing at least one environmental justice community (as of July 1, 2022) be zero-emission by January 1, 2030. By law, an environmental justice community is (1) any U.S. census block group, as determined by the most recent census, for which at least 30% of the population consists of low-income people

who are not institutionalized and have an income below 200% of the federal poverty level or (2) a distressed municipality (CGS § 22a-20a).

The bill eliminates this requirement and instead sets an interim deadline for school buses in municipalities that were distressed municipalities on July 1, 2026 (see *Background – Distressed Municipalities*). Because the definition of environmental justice community includes distressed municipalities, this change effectively reduces the number of municipalities who must meet earlier deadlines for transitioning to zero-emission school buses.

Under the bill, buses providing transportation for each school district in a distressed municipality must be 50% zero-emission by July 1, 2035. Like all school districts under the bill, the school buses in a distressed municipality must also be 90% zero-emission by July 1, 2040.

Transition Plans

The bill requires municipalities to submit plans and schedules outlining how they will comply with the bill's requirements to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner. Distressed municipalities must submit their plans by July 1, 2029, and all other municipalities must do so by July 1, 2035.

Changes to Grant Program

Current law requires DEEP to administer a grant program to give matching funds to municipalities, school districts, and bus operators who apply for federal grants to purchase zero-emission school buses and related charging infrastructure in order to maximize federal funding.

The bill makes several changes to this program. First, it broadens the purposes for which grants can be awarded by eliminating the requirement that the program provide matching funds for federal grants and instead requires that it provide a portion of funds necessary to maximize federal, state, or other sources of funding or financing. It also requires DEEP to (1) administer the program in consultation with the Connecticut Green Bank and (2) give preference to grant

applications for school buses that will operate in a distressed municipality rather than an environmental justice community, conforming with the change to the zero-emission school bus transition requirements (see above).

Safety Plans

The bill requires local and regional school boards, before purchasing or using a zero-emission school bus, to develop and implement safety plans that (1) consider the ages and developmental needs of students transported on zero-emission school buses and (2) include fire evacuation procedures.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026, except the safety plan requirement is effective upon passage.

Background — Distressed Municipalities

DECD annually designates distressed municipalities, based on high unemployment and poverty, aging housing stock, and low or declining rates of job, population, and per capita income growth (CGS § 32-9p).

The current (issued October 2025) distressed municipalities are Ansonia, Bridgeport, Bristol, Chaplin, Derby, East Hartford, East Haven, Griswold, Groton, Hartford, Killingly, Lisbon, Mansfield, Meriden, Montville, Naugatuck, New Britain, New Haven, New London, North Canaan, North Stonington, Norwich, Plainfield, Plymouth, Putnam, Preston, Sprague, Stafford, Sterling, Stratford, Torrington, Voluntown, Waterbury, West Haven, Willington, Winchester, and Windham.

Background — Related Bills

sSB 416 (File 468), § 3, favorably reported by the Transportation Committee, contains similar provisions.

HB 5470 (File 422), favorably reported by the Energy and Technology Committee, eliminates the requirement to fully transition to zero-emission buses and instead sets a deadline by which all school buses must be zero-emission, alternative fuel, or hybrid.

§ 25 — FREIGHT RAIL, SEA LANES, AND PORTS WORKING GROUP

Requires the CPA executive director, or his designee, to convene a working group to study, among other things, policies to encourage the use of freight rail, sea lanes, and ports to transport goods in the state

The bill requires the Connecticut Port Authority (CPA) executive director, or his designee, to convene a working group to study and make recommendations on:

1. potential state policies and incentives to encourage using freight rail and sea lanes and ports to transport goods within the state, such as construction materials, industrial materials, agricultural and food products, and municipal solid waste;

2. opportunities to expand freight rail and port infrastructure in the state; and

3. the environmental, economic, and transportation impacts of increasing freight rail, sea lane, and port use.

Under the bill, the CPA executive director serves as chairperson of the group, and the DEEP, DOT, and Department of Economic and Community Development commissioners (or their designees) must be members. The group must also include any other member the CPA executive director invites to participate, including representatives of manufacturer organizations, freight rail carriers, solid waste and recyclable collectors, and other members the executive director deems necessary.

The CPA executive director must schedule the working group's first meeting by September 1, 2026, and report the group's findings and recommendations to the Transportation Committee by January 1, 2027. The group ends when it submits its report or January 1, 2027, whichever is later.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

Background — Related Bill

sSB 416 (File 468), § 5, favorably reported by the Transportation

Committee, contains substantially similar provisions.

§§ 26 & 27 — DOT ENCAMPMENT REMOVALS

Establishes a notice requirement applicable to DOT's (or their agents' or contractors') removal of certain encampments located on a state highway right-of-way; requires the DOT and DMHAS commissioners to study and make recommendations on best practices and standards related to these encampments

The bill generally requires DOT, before removing an encampment located on any state highway right-of-way, to give at least 14 days' written notice stating (1) the removal's date and time and (2) that no person or personal property can remain on the right-of-way after the removal date. DOT must at least post this notice, printed in English and Spanish, at the encampment's apparent entry, exit, and common areas. When doing so, the department may also give oral or written notice to anyone present.

The bill exempts DOT from this notice requirement if the DOT commissioner determines the removal is needed due to a transportation operations or infrastructure emergency or public safety emergency. In these instances, the commissioner must document the reasons for his determination in writing.

The bill also requires the DOT and Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) commissioners to jointly study and make recommendations on best practices and standards to use when responding to, managing, or removing encampments on any state highway right-of-way.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

Definitions

Under the bill, an "encampment" is any outdoor location where at least one person sleeps or resides using tents, tarps, bedding, or other temporary shelter or structures for habitation. It does not include a campground or other location authorized for recreational camping by a federal, state, or municipal agency or a private property owner.

A "state highway right-of-way" is land DOT owns or controls for highway purposes, including the traveled way, shoulders, medians,

slopes, drainage areas, and areas under or next to bridges and overpasses. It does not include land the department owns or controls that is improved with a (1) safety rest area, (2) service plaza, (3) bus shelter, or (4) commuter parking facility built according to applicable law.

A "removal" is the full or partial clearing of an encampment by DOT (or its agents or contractors), including requiring people to leave the property and collecting, relocating, discarding, or disposing of habitation-related structures or materials and "personal property" (items that can reasonably be identified as personal belongings, have apparent value or utility, and are not hazardous).

DOT and DMHAS Encampment Study

The bill requires the DOT and DMHAS commissioners' encampment study to at least identify:

1. best practices from other states or municipalities on (a) providing advance removal notices to someone living at an encampment, including methods and reasonable timeframes for giving these notices and their frequency, and (b) personal property treatment during an encampment removal;

2. outreach and engagement procedures for trained personnel that ensure respect for the personal dignity and property of those living at an encampment;

3. appropriate state and local agencies to offer immediate assistance and support to these individuals, both before and during an encampment removal, for emergency shelters, transitional or permanent housing, social services, or other interventions;

4. guidance, training, or technical assistance for state and local agencies and municipalities on humane and effective practices for responding to, managing, and removing encampments; and

5. ways to coordinate, before an encampment removal and as appropriate, with the municipality, community-based

organizations serving people experiencing homelessness, housing authorities, other local service providers, and local law enforcement.

The bill requires the commissioners, by January 15, 2027, to jointly submit the study results and any recommendations to the Transportation Committee.

Background

Interagency Council on Homelessness. PA 25-52 established in statute the interagency council on homelessness, which is charged with advising and assisting the DOH commissioner to improve homelessness prevention and response efforts. The DMHAS commissioner is a regular member of the council and the DOT commissioner is authorized to participate as an ad hoc member, as determined by the DOH commissioner.

Related Bills. HB 5260 (File 161), reported favorably by the Housing and Planning and Development committees, generally prohibits municipalities from adopting or enforcing ordinances that prohibit a homeless person from using municipally controlled, publicly accessible outdoor areas for certain activities. The bill's restriction on ordinances generally does not apply to state-owned property in DOT's custody.

sHB 5235 (File 409), reported favorably by the Transportation and Housing committees, has substantially similar provisions.

§§ 28 & 29 — MARINE PILOT LICENSE FEES

Eliminates the fee for issuing or renewing a marine pilot license (currently $105.48 annually)

This bill eliminates the fee for issuing or renewing a marine pilot license (currently $105.48 annually).

Marine pilots are experts in local conditions and navigating specific waters who board vessels to guide them safely through their area. By law, the Connecticut Port Authority licenses marine pilots for state ports and waters, and most registered vessels must have a licensed pilot on board if they embark or disembark from a port in the state or transit the

Long Island Sound.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

Background — Related Bill

HB 5461 (File 255), favorably reported by the Transportation Committee, contains identical provisions.

§ 30 — INCREASED FINES FOR VIOLATING CERTAIN MOTOR VEHICLE EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

Increases the fine, from $150 per offense to $300 per offense, for violating certain requirements under existing law related to motor vehicle mechanical equipment, primarily involving mufflers and exhaust pipes

The bill increases the fine, from $150 per offense to $300 per offense, for violating certain requirements under existing law related to motor vehicle mechanical equipment, primarily involving mufflers and exhaust pipes. As under existing law, these violations are (1) processed through the Centralized Infractions Bureau (see §§ 5-11 & 13 *Background* above) and (2) subject to a Special Transportation Fund surcharge of 50% of the fine (CGS § 13b-70).

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.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

Background — Related Bill

sHB 5462 (File 388), § 2, reported favorably by the Transportation Committee, has identical provisions.

§§ 31-34 — REVISIONS TO THE DISTRACTED DRIVING LAW

Updates and reorganizes the distracted driving law to reflect current device and vehicle technology and how it is used; generally prohibits driving while a video is visible to the driver in the normal driving position, regardless of the technology used to play the video; prohibits holding or supporting a mobile electronic device with any part of the body while driving and failing to maintain a proper lookout

This bill revises and updates the state's distracted driving law. Among other things, it explicitly prohibits:

1. driving while a video or moving image is visible to the driver on an installed screen or similar device, with certain exceptions;

2. driving while holding or supporting a mobile electronic device with any part of the body; and

3. failing to maintain a proper lookout.

The bill reorganizes and makes various minor, technical, and conforming changes to the distracted driving law, including merging current definitions into two terms ("mobile electronic device" and "hands-free mode"), deleting redundant language, and making technical corrections to statutory references. Broadly, these changes simplify and update the law to reflect current technology and its use.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

"Mobile Electronic Device" and "Hands Free Mode"

The bill combines current law's definitions, eliminates redundant ones, and generally updates them to reflect current device and vehicle technology and how it is used (for example, voice-activated vehicle technologies).

Under current law, a "mobile electronic device" is any handheld or portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communications between two or more people, including a number of devices specified in the law. The bill (1) eliminates the definition of mobile telephone and other associated definitions and instead includes mobile telephone as one of the specified devices and (2) adds equipment to display a video or moving image to the list of devices included. It also clarifies that the law is not limited to only those listed in the definition.

The bill defines the term "hands free mode" and eliminates current law's definitions for handheld mobile telephone, hands-free accessory, and hands-free mobile telephone. "Hands-free mode" means the operation of a mobile electronic device where a user engages in voice communication or receives audio without touching or holding the device, other than to activate or deactivate it with a single touch or swipe. Compared to the definitions the bill eliminates, this new definition focuses on how a person uses the technology, as opposed to the technology's features.

Prohibited Activities

Current law prohibits using a mobile telephone to engage in a call or using a mobile telephone or mobile electronic device to type, send, or read a text message. It also (1) presumes that a driver who holds a phone near their ear is engaged in a call and (2) allows an exception for using hands-free mobile telephones.

The bill revises these prohibited activities by generally eliminating those under current law and instead prohibiting (1) holding or supporting a mobile electronic device with any part of the body, regardless of whether the driver is using it; (2) using a mobile electronic device (unless it is in hands-free mode); or (3) reading, viewing, or

typing a text message or other nonvoice message or communication on a mobile electronic device.

The bill retains (directly or indirectly) existing law's exceptions to these prohibited activities (such as emergency calls) and special circumstances (such as prohibiting young drivers from using devices even hands-free).

Driving With Video in Driver's View. Additionally, the bill explicitly prohibits driving while a video or moving image is visible to the driver, in the normal driving position, on a mobile electronic device, installed screen, or other similar device. This prohibition does not apply to (1) maps generated by GPS systems or applications, as long as the device or screen is mounted or attached to the vehicle's windshield, dashboard, or center console in a way that doesn't impede driving or (2) video or moving images used to help a driver while backing up or parking, enhance the driver's view of the road, or help the driver with object detection.

Presumably, much of the activity prohibited by this provision is considered using a mobile electronic device under current law and, so, is already illegal. The bill bans the activity, specifically, and applies it to video or moving images played on installed screens and similar devices.

Failure to Maintain Proper Lookout. Existing law also prohibits engaging in any activity that is not related to driving and that interferes with safe driving. The bill additionally prohibits failing to maintain a proper lookout while driving.

Background — Related Bill

HB 5463 (File 417), favorably reported by the Transportation Committee, contains substantially similar provisions.

§ 35 — TASK FORCE ON PARKING CHALLENGES FOR HOME HEALTH AGENCIES

Creates a task force to study and make recommendations to the Transportation Committee on parking access challenges for home health agencies delivering services in residential settings

The bill creates a task force to study and make recommendations on

parking access challenges for home health agencies (licensed home health care or home health aide agencies) delivering services in residential settings. The study must at least:

1. assess parking restrictions, time limits, permit requirements, and enforcement practices affecting home health agencies;

2. analyze areas in the state where parking limitations most impact delivering home health care services; and

3. review parking accommodation programs in other jurisdictions, including temporary permits and designated home health agency parking and enforcement exemptions.

The task force consists of 10 appointed members, as shown in the table below. Any of the non-governor-appointed members may be state legislators. All initial appointments to the task force must be made within 30 days after the bill's passage, and any vacancy must be filled by the appointing authority.

Table: Task Force Members

Appointing Authority	*Number of Appointments*	Appointee Qualifications
House speaker	Two	One home health agency employee and one person with expertise in municipal parking policy or enforcement
Senate president pro tempore	Two	One local traffic authority member of a municipality with a population of at least 100,000 (based on the most recent decennial census) and one person with expertise in municipal planning, transportation, or urban policy
House majority leader	One	Representative of a home health care agency
Senate majority leader	One	Municipal parking authority member
House minority leader	One	Representative of an association representing home health agencies
Senate minority leader	One	Representative of a statewide organization representing

Appointing Authority	*Number of Appointments*	Appointee Qualifications
		municipalities
Governor	Two	One representative of an organization advocating for patients receiving home health care services and one representative of a labor organization representing home health agency workers

Under the bill, the House speaker and Senate president pro tempore must choose the chairpersons from the task force members. The chairpersons must schedule and hold the task force's first meeting within 60 days after the bill's passage. The Transportation Committee's administrative staff also serves in that capacity for the task force.

The bill requires the task force to submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the Transportation Committee by January 1, 2027. The task force ends on the date it does so or January 1, 2027, whichever is later.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

Background — Related Bill

sHB 5238 (File 411), reported favorably by the Transportation Committee, requires the commissioner of emergency services and public protection to create a working group with a similar charge.

§ 36 — DEEP WORKING GROUP ON SCHOOL BUS ALTERNATIVE FUELS AND TECHNOLOGIES

Requires the DEEP commissioner to create a working group to evaluate and make recommendations on Connecticut school bus fleets' increased use of alternative fuels and technologies

The bill requires the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner, in support of administering the law on zero-emission school bus requirements and a related grant program (see § 24 above), to create a working group to evaluate and make recommendations on Connecticut school bus fleets' increased use of alternative fuels and technologies, including biodiesel, propane, and electric school buses.

The bill requires the working group to:

1. review school bus fleets' (in Connecticut and other jurisdictions) use of alternative fuels and technologies, including biodiesel, propane, and electric school buses, and identify relevant case studies and best practices;

2. evaluate the technical, operational, environmental, and economic considerations of school bus fleets' expanded use of alternative fuels and technologies, including (a) emissions performance, including impacts on criteria air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions; (b) fuel availability and supply constraints; (c) costs and potential savings, including lifecycle costs; (d) operational performance, including performance in cold weather; (e) impacts on engine durability and maintenance; (f) manufacturer warranty considerations; (g) fuel procurement and contracting practices for school districts and school transportation providers; and (h) a comparative assessment of alternative fuels and technologies, including renewable diesel and zero-emission school buses;

3. identify pathways and barriers to school bus fleets adopting alternative fuels and technologies, including infrastructure, contractual, regulatory, and economic considerations;

4. develop recommendations to support biodiesel's increased use where appropriate, including potential incentive structures, funding mechanisms, and procurement strategies; and

5. evaluate the role of alternative fuels as a transitional strategy toward deploying zero-emission school buses, including impacts on Connecticut's greenhouse gas reduction goals.

The bill requires (1) the DEEP commissioner, or her designee, to convene the working group and serve as its chairperson and (2) DEEP to provide administrative staff support. The working group's membership must include:

1. the commissioners of public health, education, and transportation (or their designees);

2. the Connecticut Green Bank's chief executive officer or his designee;

3. one representative of a school transportation provider operating in Connecticut;

4. one representative of a municipality or local or regional board of education;

5. one representative of the alternative fuels industry;

6. one representative of an environmental organization with expertise in air quality;

7. one representative of a statewide or regional coalition with expertise in clean transportation and alternative fuel deployment; and

8. anyone else the commissioner believes is needed to carry out the working group's purposes.

The bill requires the working group, by February 1, 2027, to submit a report to the Environment, Energy and Technology, and Transportation committees with the group's findings and recommendations, including any recommendations for regulatory or legislative action. The working group ends on the date it does so or February 1, 2027, whichever is later.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

COMMITTEE ACTION

Transportation Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute
Yea 35 Nay 0 (03/16/2026)