



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 388

February Session, 2026

Substitute House Bill No. 5462

House of Representatives, April 2, 2026

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 CONCERNING NOISE POLLUTION.

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

1 Section 1. (*Effective October 1, 2026*) (a) As used in this section, "solar
2 photovoltaic noise barrier" means a structure constructed between a
3 highway and adjacent property that incorporates solar photovoltaic
4 technology designed to generate electricity and provide highway noise
5 mitigation.

6 (b) The Commissioner of Transportation shall establish a solar
7 photovoltaic noise barrier pilot program for the purpose of evaluating
8 the feasibility, cost-effectiveness, environmental benefits and
9 effectiveness of integrating solar photovoltaic technology into noise
10 barriers located alongside state highways. The pilot program shall
11 include the design, installation, operation, maintenance and evaluation
12 of at least one, but not more than three, solar photovoltaic noise barriers.
13 The commissioner may enter into agreements with third parties for the
14 design, installation, operation or maintenance, or any combination

15 thereof, of solar photovoltaic noise barriers. The commissioner shall
16 consult with the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority regarding electric
17 interconnection and net metering eligibility.

18 (c) Not later than January 1, 2028, the commissioner shall submit a
19 report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general
20 statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly
21 having cognizance of matters relating to transportation. Such report
22 shall include information concerning the total costs of the pilot program;
23 electricity generation data; maintenance and performance, safety and
24 structural findings; environmental impacts and any recommendation
25 for the continuation, expansion or modification of the pilot program.

26 Sec. 2. Section 14-80 of the general statutes is repealed and the
27 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

28 (a) Each motor vehicle and the devices on such vehicle shall be
29 operated, equipped, constructed and adjusted to prevent unnecessary
30 or unusual noise.

31 (b) (1) Each motor vehicle operated by an internal combustion engine
32 shall be equipped, except as hereinafter provided, with a muffler or
33 mufflers designed to prevent excessive, unusual or unnecessary exhaust
34 noise. The muffler or mufflers shall be maintained by the owner in good
35 working order and shall be in use whenever the motor vehicle is
36 operated.

37 (2) No person, including a motor vehicle dealer or repairer or a
38 motorcycle dealer, shall install, and no person shall use, on a motor
39 vehicle, a muffler or mufflers lacking interior baffle plates or other
40 effective muffling devices, a gutted muffler, a muffler cutout or a
41 straight exhaust except when the motor vehicle is operated in a race,
42 contest or demonstration of speed or skill as a public exhibition
43 pursuant to subsection (a) of section 14-164a, or any mechanical device
44 which will amplify the noise emitted by the vehicle.

45 (3) No person, including a motor vehicle dealer or repairer or a

46 motorcycle dealer, shall remove all or part of any muffler on a motor
47 vehicle except to repair or replace the muffler or part for the more
48 effective prevention of noise.

49 (4) No person shall use on the exhaust system or tail pipe of a motor
50 vehicle any extension or device which will cause excessive or unusual
51 noise.

52 (c) The engine of every motor vehicle shall be equipped and adjusted
53 to prevent excessive fumes or exhaust smoke.

54 (d) All pipes carrying exhaust gases from the motor shall be
55 constructed of, and maintained with, leak-proof metal. Exhaust pipes
56 shall be directed from the muffler or mufflers toward the rear of the
57 vehicle and shall be approximately parallel with the longitudinal axis of
58 the vehicle and approximately parallel to the surface of the roadway, or
59 shall be directed from the muffler upward to a location above the cab or
60 body of the vehicle so that fumes, gases and smoke are directed away
61 from the occupants of the vehicle. Exhaust pipes on a passenger vehicle
62 shall extend to the extreme rear end of the vehicle's body, not including
63 the bumper and its attachments to the body, or shall be attached to the
64 vehicle in such a way that the exhaust pipes direct the exhaust gases to
65 either side of the vehicle ensuring that fresh ambient air is located under
66 the vehicle at all times. The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles may adopt
67 regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, to establish
68 safety standards for passenger vehicles equipped with exhaust pipes
69 located in front of the rear axle.

70 (e) Every motor vehicle shall, when operated on a highway, be
71 equipped with a horn in good working order and capable of emitting
72 sound audible under normal conditions from a distance of not less than
73 two hundred feet, but no horn or other warning device shall emit an
74 unreasonably loud or harsh sound or a whistle.

75 (f) (1) No vehicle shall be equipped with, nor shall any person use on
76 a vehicle, any siren, whistle or bell as a warning signal device, except as
77 otherwise permitted by this section.

78 (2) Any motor vehicle may be equipped with a theft alarm signal
79 device which is so arranged that it cannot be used by the driver as an
80 ordinary warning signal.

81 (3) Any authorized emergency vehicle may be equipped with a siren,
82 whistle or bell, capable of emitting sound audible under normal
83 conditions from a distance of not less than five hundred feet and of a
84 type approved by the Department of Motor Vehicles. Such signal shall
85 not be used unless the vehicle is operated in response to an emergency
86 call or in the immediate pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the
87 law, in which event the driver of the vehicle shall sound the signal when
88 reasonably necessary to warn pedestrians and other drivers of the
89 approach of the vehicle.

90 (g) Any person who violates any provision of this section shall be
91 fined one [hundred fifty] thousand dollars for each offense.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	October 1, 2026	New section
Sec. 2	October 1, 2026	14-80

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Section 1(b), "performance" was changed to "effectiveness" for clarity.

TRA Joint Favorable Subst. -LCO

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 27 \$	FY 28 \$
Department of Transportation	TF - Cost	See Below	See Below
State Revenues	GF&TF - Revenue Gain	See Below	See Below

Note: TF=Transportation Fund; GF&TF=General Fund & Transportation Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

Section 1 results in costs to the Department of Transportation (DOT) by requiring the agency to establish a solar photovoltaic noise barrier pilot program, which must include the design, installation, operation, maintenance and evaluation of at least one and no more than three barriers.

Costs to establish the pilot program will depend on implementation decisions made by DOT and available funding but could reasonably include the following: (1) approximately \$500,000 annually in consultant and/or staff costs to manage the pilot, including costs for planning, researching, training, evaluation, and reporting, (2) a detailed technical noise study at each site, costing approximately \$100,000 per site, (3) construction and installation of the barriers themselves which, according to preliminary DOT research, could be approximately \$3 million per mile,¹ and (4) ongoing maintenance costs particular to these

¹ Costs for solar photovoltaic noise barriers are difficult to estimate because this technology is not yet widely used on the U.S. highway system and costs are expected to vary based on local conditions. For context, traditional noise barrier project costs are approximately \$2 million per mile in Connecticut.

barriers, such as more complex vegetative management.

The bill also allows DOT to enter into agreements with third parties for this work which may limit the upfront costs to the state depending on the terms and scope of any agreement.

Section 2 increases the fine, from \$150 per offense to \$1,000 per offense, for certain noise-related motor vehicle violations, resulting in revenue gain from fines.²

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to the timing and scope of the pilot, ongoing maintenance costs, the terms of any third-party agreement, and the number of offenses.

² Between FY 22 and FY 25, there were a total of 1,557 offenses recorded and \$131,000 in fines collected under CGS § 14-80.

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)