

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 26-63—sHB 5464

Transportation Committee

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND CONCERNING VEGETATION MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES, TRANSPORTATION NETWORK COMPANIES AND RIDER SAFETY, TRAFFIC SIGNAL MODERNIZATION GRANT PROGRAM, ENCAMPMENTS, MARINE PILOT LICENSE FEES, MOTOR VEHICLE MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT, DISTRACTED DRIVING, A TASK FORCE TO STUDY ACCESS TO PARKING FOR HOME HEALTH AGENCIES AND A WORKING GROUP TO STUDY USE OF ALTERNATIVE FUELS AND TECHNOLOGIES IN SCHOOL BUS FLEETS

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

§ 1 — DIESEL-FUELED TRANSIT BUSES

Allows the state to procure diesel-fueled transit buses by eliminating a prohibition on doing so that had begun January 1, 2024

§ 2 — STATE AGENCY EV CHARGING STATION PARKING SPOTS

Allows plug-in hybrid and battery EVs to park in spots with state agency EV charging stations while not actively charging, at the discretion of the applicable state agency

§ 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 their car parking spaces be EV capable, rather than requiring that 20% of certain parking spaces be installed with level two EV charging stations; requires certain commissioners to periodically make recommendations on revising the EV charging station requirement

§ 4 — PORT EASTSIDE INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

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

§§ 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

§ 12 — GOVERNOR'S TRAVEL RESTRICTION ORDERS

Sets in statute the maximum fine for violating a governor-issued travel restriction order at \$250

[§§ 14 & 38 — ROAD AND BRIDGE NAMING](#)

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

[§§ 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

[§§ 17-21 — 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

[§§ 22 & 23 — TRAFFIC SIGNAL GRANT PROGRAM](#)

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

[§§ 24 & 37 — 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

[§ 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 generally applicable to DOT’s (or their agents’ or contractors’) removal of 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 for addressing these encampments

[§§ 28 & 29 — MARINE PILOT LICENSE FEES](#)

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

[§ 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

[§§ 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

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

EFFECTIVE DATE: Various, see below.

§ 1 — DIESEL-FUELED TRANSIT BUSES

Allows the state to procure diesel-fueled transit buses by eliminating a prohibition on doing so that had begun January 1, 2024

The act allows the state to procure, purchase, or lease diesel-fueled transit buses by eliminating a prohibition against it doing so that had begun January 1, 2024. Existing law, unchanged by the act, 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 park in spots with state agency EV charging stations while not actively charging, at the discretion of the applicable state agency

The act allows plug-in hybrid and battery electric vehicles (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. Prior law prohibited parking in these spots unless the vehicle was charging.

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

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 3 — EV CHARGING STATIONS AT CERTAIN NEW STATE FACILITIES

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

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

Starting July 1, 2026, the act changes the EV charging station requirement for new state facilities projected to cost more than \$100,000 by requiring 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.

Prior law instead required 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.)

By January 1, 2029, and then every three years after that, the act requires the transportation, administrative services, and energy and environmental protection commissioners to jointly submit recommendations on the act’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 exempted 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 act eliminates the traffic control and highway safety-related exemptions for district improvements. Under prior law, these included exemptions from laws:

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

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 the Department of Transportation (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 where 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 act 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). Specifically, OSTA may do so for the following uses: (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; or (2) to redirect an opposing highway lane into a one-way lane. The act also generally allows OSTA to do this as needed to maintain the function of the state's highway system. It allows OSTA to adopt implementing regulations.

Relatedly, the act sets restrictions for driving 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 act also sets various conditions, requirements, and procedures for operating a flex lane control system, issuing tickets and enforcing violations, and collecting and retaining data.

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 act establishes restrictions on motor vehicle operation in OSTA-designated flex lanes that vary based on the flex lane's designated use.

HOV Lanes. The act limits HOV flex lanes to vehicles with at least one passenger and blood transport vehicles transporting human blood and blood products between a collection point and a hospital or storage center according to existing law's requirements.

Bus Use. The act limits flex lanes dedicated to bus rapid transit or other bus use to:

1. 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 and
2. motor vehicle operators directed to stop or park by a law enforcement officer or "official traffic control device" (such as signs, traffic signals, or other markings).

Emergency Use. The act limits flex lanes dedicated for authorized emergency vehicles responding to an emergency to these operators or motor vehicle operators obeying a law enforcement officer's direction.

Other Uses. Under the act, 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 act 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 act'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 act'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 act 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 act's flex lane restrictions.

The act 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 act’s flex lane restrictions or a related municipal ordinance, and the images may not be used for surveillance;
- 3. drivers must be notified through signs and DOT’s website; and
- 4. control system operators must meet certain training, record keeping, and system testing requirements.

The act 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 act requires (1) at least two clearly visible road signs to be placed at a reasonable distance before the flex lane and (2) an appropriate, clearly visible sign to be placed at its end point if it has an operational control system. The first sign must indicate why OSTA designated the flex lane and the second must indicate whether or not the control system is operating.

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

Vendors and Contracts. The act 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 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 act (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 act requires flex lane control system operators to complete training from the system’s manufacturer, or the manufacturer’s representative, on the system’s setup, testing, and operating procedures. 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 act 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 act, 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 act’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 act's flex lane restrictions or a related municipal ordinance, the images must be reviewed by 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. After review, if 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 act, 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 act 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 act 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 act requires DMV to give DOT and vendors information on owners of vehicles captured allegedly violating the act'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 act, owners who receive violation notices must generally follow CIB procedures for mail-in violations (see *Background — Centralized Infractions Bureau*), but a different procedure applies to violation notices issued under a municipal ordinance (see below).

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

Under the act, 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.

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

All fine revenue must be deposited into the Special Transportation Fund (STF), 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 act 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 act's flex lane restrictions:

1. the violation happened while 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 act's requirements on accuracy testing, certification, or calibration.

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

Privacy (§§ 5 & 9)

The act 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 act'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 act, "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; and the date, time, location, or direction of travel on a highway.

The act 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 act, 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 act'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 act 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 act 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 who was issued a citation about his or her right to contest it 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 act 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).

§ 12 — GOVERNOR'S TRAVEL RESTRICTION ORDERS

Sets in statute the maximum fine for violating a governor-issued travel restriction order at \$250

The act sets in statute the fine for violating a governor-issued travel restriction order at up to \$250. Under prior law, violations were infractions (see [Table on Penalties](#)), so the fine (\$50 as of October 2025) was set administratively. Under the act, these violations are still processed through CIB (see *Background — Centralized Infractions Bureau* above).

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

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 & 38 — 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 act 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 act 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. Along with the final report, the act also requires the UConn department to submit its study results and any related recommendations to DOT, in addition to the Environment and Transportation committees as existing law requires.

Relatedly, the act 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 Environment and Transportation committees explaining why. Alternatively, if he revises the guidelines based on UConn’s study, he must submit them to these legislative committees, which may then 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.

§§ 17-21 — 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 act 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 act (1) requires TNCs to have certain safety features for 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 indicate on the offer whether the requesting rider is verified by the company.

The act 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 act delays, from January 1, 2026, to February 1, 2027, the deadline for Connecticut-registered TNCs to begin annually reporting 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 act, 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 act requires TNCs, through their digital networks, to notify the rider about any available safety features that can be used during the ride. The act 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 (which is generally a facility that receives 9-1-1 calls and dispatches emergency response services or transfers calls to other public safety agencies);
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.

Telemetric Monitoring. The act 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 act, “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 act 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 act increases the frequency of the criminal history records checks TNCs must conduct for each person permitted to drive for the company by requiring them annually rather than every three years as prior law required.

Additionally, the act 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 act, this notice must include the driver’s

first and last name, birthdate, and driver's license number. By law and under the act, 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 act, when drivers are offered a prearranged ride, the TNC must indicate 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 act 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 nondiscrimination policy (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 act specifies that TNCs must maintain and enforce their policies. It also requires each of them to adopt, maintain, and enforce a service animal nondiscrimination policy that at least:

1. prohibits 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. requires 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. requires 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 after

the reported cancellation or refusal; and

4. requires 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.

§§ 22 & 23 — TRAFFIC SIGNAL GRANT PROGRAM

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

Existing law (1) requires the 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 and (2) reserves \$75 million from a DOT bond authorization for the program.

Prior law required DOT to (1) create incentives for projects undertaken by two or more municipalities and (2) prioritize grant applications submitted by them. The act instead requires DOT to give priority to projects located in heavily congested areas.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026, except a minor change to the bonding provision is effective July 1, 2026.

§§ 24 & 37 — 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

Zero-Emission School Bus Deadlines

Existing law requires school districts to gradually transition to zero-emission school buses 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 prior law, 100% of school buses that provide transportation for school districts in the state had to 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 act:

1. eliminates the 2035 requirement and
2. lowers the percentage of buses in each district that must be zero-emission by 2040 to 90%.

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

Requirement in Environmental Justice Communities and Distressed Municipalities. Prior law set an earlier deadline for some school districts, requiring that 100% of buses providing transportation for school districts located entirely within 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 is 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 act eliminates this requirement and instead sets an interim deadline for school buses in 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 act, 50% of buses providing transportation for each school district in a distressed municipality must be zero-emission by July 1, 2035. Like all school districts under the act, 90% of the school buses in a distressed municipality must also be zero-emission by January 1, 2040.

Transition Plans

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

Changes to Grant Program

The law requires DEEP to administer a grant program to generally give municipalities, school districts, and bus operators funds for purchasing or leasing zero-emission school buses and related charging or fueling infrastructure.

The act 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 needed to maximize federal, state, or other sources of funding or financing. (PA 26-124, § 4, makes a similar change to the program.)

The act also requires DEEP to (1) administer the program in consultation with the Connecticut Green Bank and (2) give preference to grant applications for zero-emission 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 act 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.

§ 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 act 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, 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 act, 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

§§ 26 & 27 — DOT ENCAMPMENT REMOVALS

Establishes a notice requirement generally applicable to DOT's (or their agents' or contractors') removal of 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 for addressing these encampments

The act 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 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 act exempts DOT from this notice requirement if the DOT commissioner

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

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 act 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 state highway rights-of-way.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

Definitions

Under the act, an “encampment” is any outdoor location where at least one person sleeps or resides using tents, tarps, bedding, or other temporary shelters 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 DOT-owned or -controlled land 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” (non-hazardous items that can reasonably be identified as personal belongings and have apparent value or utility).

DOT and DMHAS Encampment Study

The act 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

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

the municipality, community-based organizations serving people experiencing homelessness, housing authorities, other local service providers, and local law enforcement.

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

§§ 28 & 29 — MARINE PILOT LICENSE FEES

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

The act eliminates the fee for issuing or renewing a marine pilot license (previously \$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, CPA 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

§ 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 act 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 CIB (see §§ 5-11 & 13 *Background — Centralized Infractions Bureau* above) and (2) subject to an STF 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 or failing to maintain a working muffler;
3. installing or using a (a) muffler without interior baffle plates or other effective muffling devices, (b) gutted muffler, (c) muffler cutout, (d) straight exhaust, or (e) mechanical device that amplifies the vehicle's emitted noise;
4. removing or replacing all or part of a muffler except to repair or replace it;
5. using an extension or device on an exhaust system or tail pipe that will cause excessive or unusual noise;
6. operating a motor vehicle that emits excessive fumes or exhaust smoke;
7. violating requirements for constructing, placing, or positioning exhaust

- pipes on a motor vehicle;
 - 8. operating a motor vehicle with a defective horn; and
 - 9. illegally operating a warning siren, whistle, or bell on a motor vehicle.
- EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§§ 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

The act 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 act reorganizes and makes various minor, technical, and conforming changes to the distracted driving law, including merging prior 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 act combines 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).

By law, a “mobile electronic device” is generally any handheld or portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communications between two or more people, including a number of specified devices. The act (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 specified devices. It also clarifies that the law is not limited to only those listed in the definition.

The act defines the term “hands free mode” and eliminates prior 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 act eliminates, this new definition focuses on how a person uses the technology, as opposed to the technology’s features.

Prohibited Activities

Prior law prohibited drivers from 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) presumed that a driver who holds a phone near their ear is engaged in a call and (2) allowed an exception for using hands-free mobile telephones.

The act revises these prohibited activities by generally eliminating those under prior 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 act 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 if hands-free).

Driving With Video in Driver's View. The act 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 was considered using a mobile electronic device under prior law and, so, was already illegal. The act 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 act additionally prohibits failing to maintain a proper lookout while driving.

§ 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 act 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 other jurisdictions' parking accommodation programs, such as

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

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 by June 26, 2026, and any vacancy must be filled by the appointing authority.

Task Force Members

<i>Appointing Authority</i>	<i>Number of Appointments</i>	<i>Appointee Qualifications</i>
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 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 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 act, 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 by July 26, 2026. The Transportation Committee's administrative staff also serves in that capacity for the task force.

The act 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 that date or when it submits the report, whichever is later.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 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 act requires the 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 act 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 for expanded use of alternative fuels and technologies in school bus fleets, including (a) emissions performance (and 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 adopting alternative fuels and technologies in school bus fleets, 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 act 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 public health, education, and transportation commissioners (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 school board;
5. one representative of the alternative fuels industry;
6. one representative of an environmental organization with expertise in air

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

- 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 act 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 that date or when it submits the report, whichever is later.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage