



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Office of the  
Commissioner

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### **Public Hearing – March 10, 2010 Transportation Committee**

### **Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Joseph F. Marie Department of Transportation**

### **H.B. 5456 - An Act Eliminating Reimbursement to Members of the Connecticut Pilot Commission and the Connecticut Maritime Commission, and Providing Staff Support To The Connecticut Pilot Commission.**

*(Department of Transportation proposal)*

The Department of Transportation (Department) supports language in H.B. 5456 to clarify language in both the Connecticut Maritime Commission and the Connecticut Pilot Commission statutes. The proposed bill deletes references to the reimbursement of commission members making the language comparable to that of other boards and commissions and specifically clarifies in the pilot commission statute that there is no compensation.

Both the Connecticut Maritime Commission and the Connecticut Pilot Commission are administratively within the Department, each with a specific mission. Each consist of members called "commissioners" that are appointed by the Governor and legislative leaders. Each also has one or more ex-officio members from a state agency.

The Connecticut Maritime Commission is established by CGS Sec 13b-51a as an advisory group to the Governor, the General Assembly and the Department. The statute states that "Members shall receive no compensation for the performance of their duties but shall be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the performance thereof." Although the statute is clear about compensation, there is no definition for "necessary expenses".

The Connecticut Pilot Commission is established by CGS Sec 15-13c as an advisory group to the Governor and Commissioner of the Department of Transportation. The Statute states that "Members shall be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties" and otherwise does not address compensation.

Prior to 2006, some members from both commissions filed for and received reimbursement for mileage to attend monthly meetings as a "necessary expense". Issues were more recently raised about state liability relative to accidents that might occur while a Commission member traveled to or from a meeting in the privately owned vehicle while being reimbursed by the State. Additionally, statewide reductions in programmatic operating budgets necessitated a review of expenditures.

Most if not all other advisory boards and commissions established by state statute have specific language stating that its members shall not receive any compensation or reimbursement. Necessary expenses and duties are not defined leading to confusion.

The total estimated savings per year is \$2,500.00.

An additional change recommended by H.B. 5456 brings staff support parity between the two Commissions. CGS Sec.13b-51b also establishes a State Maritime Office with the Department. One of the duties of the Maritime Office is to provide staff support to the Connecticut Maritime Commission. The Pilot Commission has requested that language be added to Sec 13b-51b to allow the Maritime Office to provide staff support to the Pilot Commission in a manner similar to support provided to the Maritime Commission. The Department concurs. The change would merely codify support that is already provided to the Pilot Commission by the Maritime Office in practice.

For further information or questions, please contact Pam Sucato, Legislative Program Manager for the Department of Transportation at (860) 594-3013.