
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5056

AN ACT MAKING TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS TO CERTAIN STATUTES CONCERNING MUNICIPALITIES AND REGIONAL PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS AND CONCERNING GROWTH-RELATED PROJECTS.

SUMMARY:

This bill raises, from \$100,000 to \$200,000, the threshold at which certain state agency capital projects and grant authorizations are considered growth-related projects and thus, must be undertaken in designated priority funding areas. Existing law (1) requires the State Plan of Conservation and Development (C&D) to identify these areas and (2) generally prohibits state agencies, departments, or institutions from providing funding for growth-related projects outside of them. By raising this threshold, the bill aligns it with the threshold the law sets for state agency actions that must be consistent with the State Plan of C&D (§ 6).

The bill subjects state grants of more than \$200,000 to the priority funding area restrictions if the grant is for a project that adds to an existing facility. As under current law, grants for certain projects and activities, including for maintaining, repairing, or renovating existing facilities, are exempt from the restrictions (§ 6).

The bill makes changes to conform with PA 13-247, which eliminates regional planning agencies after January 1, 2015, leaving regional councils of governments (COG) as the only regional planning organizations within the state's planning regions (§§ 1-3).

The bill also makes technical changes (§§ 4 & 5).

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except for the growth-related project provisions, which are effective October 1, 2014 and the COG provisions, which are effective January 1, 2015.

STATE FUNDING FOR GROWTH-RELATED PROJECTS

Project Thresholds

The bill raises, from \$100,000 to \$200,000, the threshold at which the following activities are considered growth-related projects:

1. acquiring real property, other than open space for conservation or preservation purposes;
2. developing or improving real property;
3. acquiring public transportation facilities or equipment; and
4. authorizing state grants, with certain exceptions, if the grant application was not pending on July 1, 2006, to (a) acquire, develop, or improve real property or (b) acquire public transportation equipment or facilities.

By law, when the state agency actions described above exceed \$200,000 and are funded by the state or federal government, they must be consistent with the State Plan of C&D (CGS § 16a-31).

BACKGROUND

State Plan of C&D and Priority Funding Areas

The State Plan of C&D is a statement of the state's development, resource management, and public investment policies. The Office of Policy and Management develops the plan, which goes before the legislature for a hearing and approval.

Under the plan, the boundaries of priority funding areas are census blocks:

1. designated by the U.S. Census as an urban area or urban cluster,
2. with a boundary intersecting a half-mile buffer around existing or planned mass-transit stations,
3. with existing or planned sewer service,
4. with existing or planned water service, or

5. with local bus service provided seven days a week.

State agencies funding or undertaking a growth-related project must do so in such areas, unless the agency complies with the statutory exception process.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Planning and Development Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 15 Nay 0 (03/12/2014)