

---

## OLR Bill Analysis

**sHB 7306 (as amended by House "A")\***

***AN ACT CONCERNING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES' BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON TOURISM.***

### **SUMMARY**

This bill requires that, within available appropriations, (1) restroom facilities at the state's six visitor welcome centers be open 24 hours per day and (2) visitor center signage indicate the hours when the centers are open. The bill incorporates these requirements into the list of measures the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) commissioner must take, within available appropriations, to enhance visitor welcome centers.

The bill also establishes a 29-member Connecticut Tourism Council, chaired by the DECD commissioner, and requires it to, among other things, (1) evaluate DECD's strategic marketing plan and (2) annually report to the Commerce Committee, beginning by January 1, 2021, on the plan and the state's tourism promotion efforts. The bill places the council within DECD for administrative purposes only.

Lastly, the bill requires the Department of Transportation (DOT) commissioner to study wayfinding signage in the state, including the signs on limited access highways indicating attractions and lodging, food, information, and fuel services. The study must include an analysis of the standards for, or regulation of, local business advertising on the signs. By February 1, 2020, the commissioner must report his findings and recommended changes to the standards and regulations to the Commerce and Transportation committees.

\*House Amendment "A" (1) eliminates provisions removing the "within available appropriations" restriction with regard to DECD's staffing and management of visitor center operations, (2) gives both

the Senate president pro tempore and House Speaker an additional appointment to the council, and (3) modifies the required qualifications for each of the council's legislative appointees.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

## **CONNECTICUT TOURISM COUNCIL**

### ***Membership***

Under the bill, the council is composed of the DECD, DOT, and Department of Energy and Environmental Protection commissioners, or their designees, and the additional appointments shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Connecticut Tourism Council Appointments**

| <b><i>Appointing Authority</i></b> | <b><i>Number of Appointees</i></b> | <b><i>Qualifications<br/>(Representatives of the following)</i></b>  |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Governor                           | 12                                 | Lodging industry (1)<br>Chamber of commerce (1)<br>Tourist attraction (1)<br>The arts (1)<br>Culturally diverse event or attraction (1)<br>Heritage tourism industry (1)<br>Airline industry (1)<br>Connecticut Airport Authority (1)<br>Convention center and sports arena trade organization (1)<br>Charter bus trade organization (1)<br>Casino gaming facilities (2) |
| Senate president pro tempore       | 3                                  | Agritourism industry (1)<br>Convention center and coliseum industry (1)<br>Eastern regional tourism district (1)   |
| Senate majority leader             | 2                                  | Events industry (1)<br>Western regional tourism district (1)   |
| Senate minority leader             | 2                                  | Marine trades industry (1)<br>Outdoor recreation industry (1)  |
| House speaker                      | 3                                  | Destination shopping industry (1)<br>Restaurant industry (1)<br>Central regional tourism district (1)  |
| House majority leader              | 2                                  | Attractions industry (1)<br>Lodging industry (1)   |

| <b>Appointing Authority</b> | <b>Number of Appointees</b> | <b>Qualifications<br/>(Representatives of the following)</b> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| House minority leader       | 2                           | Museum industry (1)<br>Tour and travel industry (1)          |

The governor's appointees serve four year terms, while the legislative appointees' terms are coterminous with the appointing legislator.

### **Duties**

The council must do the following:

1. adopt procedures for its operation;
2. review and approve, or recommend changes to, DECD's existing strategic marketing plan; and
3. annually report to the Commerce Committee on the state's tourism promotion efforts and its evaluation of DECD's plan.

### **BACKGROUND**

#### **Related Bill**

SB 192 (File 363), reported favorably by the Commerce Committee, requires the DECD commissioner to develop a plan to recruit local volunteers to staff the visitor centers and reopen any closed centers.

### **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Commerce Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 19 Nay 0 (03/19/2019)

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 41 Nay 3 (05/13/2019)