sHB-7306
AN ACT CONCERNING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES' BLUE RIBBON
COMMISSION ON TOURISM.

   As Amended by House "A" (LCO 9262)
House Calendar No.: 233

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**OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency Affected</th>
<th>Fund-Effect</th>
<th>FY 20 $</th>
<th>FY 21 $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of Economic &amp; Community Development</td>
<td>GF - See Below</td>
<td>See Below</td>
<td>See Below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Transportation</td>
<td>TF - Potential Cost</td>
<td>See Below</td>
<td>See Below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits¹</td>
<td>TF - Potential Cost</td>
<td>See Below</td>
<td>See Below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: GF=General Fund; TF=Transportation Fund

**Municipal Impact:** None

**Explanation**

The bill specifies that the opening of the welcome centers be implemented subject to available funds. This does not alter the fiscal impact identified below.

The bill requires the restroom facilities at the State’s six welcome centers to be open 24 hours per day. Of these six centers, three are open part time, 2 are open full time and one has been closed.

Currently, the welcome centers in West Willington, Danbury and North Stonington are within the rest area facilities which are

¹The fringe benefit costs for most state employees are budgeted centrally in accounts administered by the Comptroller. The estimated active employee fringe benefit cost associated with most personnel changes is 41.19% of payroll in FY 20 and FY 21.
maintained by the Department of Transportation (DOT) during the hours of 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. There are 12 rest area attendants at an annual cost of approximately $500,000. By keeping these three welcome centers open an additional 16 hours for restroom facilities, there would an associated cost of up to $371,894 for six rest area attendant positions ($263,400 for salary and $108,494 for fringe benefit costs). This cost is dependent on having one rest area attendant stationed at each welcome center for each shift. Also, to staff the welcome centers, there is an estimated cost of up to $1.3 million annually to the Department of Economic and Community Development. These costs include salaries, fringe benefits and expenses in addition to a one-time cost of $150,000 for physical improvements.

The welcome centers of Greenwich and Darien are within the service plazas and are currently open 24 hours a day which will not result in a cost as they are already overseen by DOT’s Property and Facilities Division.

The Westbrook welcome center has been closed since July 27, 2016. There would be an anticipated cost of up to $100,000 for the inspection, cleaning and other repairs needed to open the visitor welcome center. Also, an associated cost of $185,947 ($131,700 for salary and $54,247 for fringe benefit costs) would be needed for three rest area attendant positions. This cost is dependent on having one rest area attendant stationed for each shift.

sHB 7148, the FY 20 and FY 21 budget bill, as favorably reported by the Appropriations Committee, appropriated $1.3 million in the Department of Transportation and $655,100 in the Department of Economic and Community Development for this purpose.

Lastly, the bill makes changes to the Connecticut Tourism Council which has no fiscal impact.

House “A” eliminates section 1 of the original bill and its associated fiscal impact and results in the impact described above.
The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above, absent the cost to open the Westbrook Center, would continue into the future subject to number of open visitor welcome centers.