OLR Bill Analysis
sSB 252

AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONNECTICUT FOOD POLICY COUNCIL.

SUMMARY

This bill amends the Connecticut Food Policy Council’s membership and duties. It ends the terms of current appointed members on June 30, 2019, and after that date expands the 12-member council to 19 members, including the addition of the commissioners of Consumer Protection, Economic and Community Development, Energy and Environmental Protection, or their designees, and the removal of the Department of Administrative Services.

Among other duties, the bill charges the council with (1) examining food and nutrition-related programs, issues, and policies and (2) developing recommendations to promote a strong food economy and support community access to healthy foods. It allows the council to work with local and state-wide food networks and commissions on food action planning activities. By law, and under the bill, the council must advise and provide information to the governor on the state’s food policy.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

Current law requires the six legislative leaders to each appoint one council member representing a specified stakeholder group (i.e., agriculture and anti-hunger organizations, food retailers, produce wholesalers, and the cooperative extension service). The commissioners of administrative services, agriculture, education, public health, social services, and transportation, or their designees, also have voting rights on the current council. In addition, the Environment Committee chairman and the heads of the remaining
executive branch departments serve as ex-officio members without voting rights.

The bill terminates membership for the current council’s six appointed members on June 30, 2019. It adds eight members representing local or state-wide food commissions, councils, or networks, appointed as follows: two each by the House speaker and Senate president and one each by the House and Senate majority and minority leaders. Under the bill, the (1) governor must appoint one anti-hunger organization representative and one agricultural producer and (2) UConn president must designate a representative from the cooperative extension service. It also adds the commissioners of consumer protection, economic and community development, energy and environmental protection, or their designees, and removes the commissioner of administrative services and all non-voting members.

Appointed council members serve three-year terms beginning on the date of their appointment. Initial appointments must be made by September 1, 2019, and vacancies are filled for the balance of the unexpired term, if applicable. Under the bill, the council must elect two chairpersons and a vice chairperson from among its members, however one chair must be a department head and one must be a member of the public. Current law requires members to elect one chairperson and vice chairperson.

**COUNCIL DUTIES**

Current law requires the council to develop, coordinate, and implement a food system policy linking local economic development and environmental protection and preservation with farming and urban issues.

Under the bill, the council must examine (1) food and nutrition-related programs, issues, and policies, and develop recommendations to promote a strong food economy and support community access to healthy foods and (2) food policy at the local level and coordinate with local entities on existing and proposed local food policy. It allows the council to work with local and state-wide food networks and
commissions on food action planning activities.

The bill authorizes the council to make recommendations related to the following:

1. increased collaboration and communication among state agencies and among local, state, and federal agencies;

2. opportunities to leverage private and public market influence (e.g., institutional purchasing and contracts);

3. modifications to existing or proposed state or federal laws, regulations, or policies relevant to the food system, food economy, food security, and access to healthy foods in the state (current law requires the council to review and comment on any proposed state legislation and regulations regarding the state’s food policy);

4. improvements to state or federal program implementation relevant to the food system, food economy, food security, and access to healthy foods in the state;

5. identification of additional federal, state, local, and private investments needed to accomplish the council’s recommendations; and

6. any other topic deemed relevant by the council.

The bill modifies the council’s annual legislative reporting requirement. It requires the council to (1) provide recommendations on legislation, rather than concerning food policy, and (2) submit the report to the General Assembly instead of the Environment Committee.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 16  Nay 0  (03/29/2019)