



General Assembly

February Session, 2020

**Raised Bill No. 295**

LCO No. 1548



Referred to Committee on ENVIRONMENT

Introduced by:  
(ENV)

***AN ACT CONCERNING THE SELECTION OF CATERERS FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO RENT STATE-OWNED VENUES.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 23-26 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2020*):

3 (a) The commissioner may (1) provide for the collection of fees for  
4 parking, admission, boat launching and other uses of state parks,  
5 forests, boat launches and other state recreational facilities, (2) establish  
6 from time to time the daily and seasonal amount thereof, (3) enter into  
7 contractual relations with other persons for the operation of  
8 concessions, (4) establish other sources of revenue to be derived from  
9 services to the general public using such parks, forests and facilities, (5)  
10 employ such assistants as may be necessary for the collection of such  
11 revenue. The commissioner shall deposit such revenue derived  
12 therefrom with the State Treasurer in the Passport to the Parks account  
13 established pursuant to section 23-15h. On and after July 1, 1992, any  
14 increase in any fee or any establishment of a new fee under this section  
15 shall be by regulations adopted in accordance with the provisions of

16 chapter 54. Not later than May 1, 2010, said commissioner shall establish  
17 the daily and seasonal amount of such parking, admission, boat  
18 launching and other use fees for residents of this state in amounts not  
19 greater than one hundred thirty-five per cent of the amounts charged  
20 for such fees by said commissioner as of April 1, 2009. Not later than  
21 May 1, 2010, said commissioner shall establish the daily and seasonal  
22 amount of such parking, admission, boat launching and other use fees  
23 for nonresidents of this state in amounts not greater than one hundred  
24 fifty per cent of the amounts charged for such fees by said commissioner  
25 as of April 1, 2009. Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, the  
26 commissioner may enter into an agreement with any municipality  
27 under which the municipality may retain fees collected by municipal  
28 officers at state boat launches when state employees are not on duty.  
29 Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to require any person who  
30 rents a venue at a state park or other facility to utilize the services of any  
31 caterer who may otherwise have a contract with the commissioner to  
32 provide catering services at such venue, provided if the caterer of such  
33 person's choice is not approved to otherwise provide such catering  
34 services at such facility, such person may provide information required  
35 by the commissioner for such approval not later than twelve months  
36 prior to the date of such rental for review and approval by the  
37 commissioner.

38 (b) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section,  
39 the commissioner may establish fees for the public use of the mansion  
40 at Harkness Memorial State Park in Waterford, the Ellie Mitchell  
41 Pavilion at Rocky Neck State Park in East Lyme and Gillette Castle State  
42 Park in East Haddam provided no fee shall be charged to any group  
43 organized as a nonprofit corporation under 26 USC 501(c)(3) for  
44 purposes of providing support to such parks or facilities and further  
45 provided the commissioner shall specify procedures and criteria for the  
46 selection of any private business which is engaged by the state to  
47 provide services during any such public use, including, but not limited  
48 to, catering services. Such fees, procedures and criteria shall be effective

49 until June 30, 1999, or until regulations are adopted, whichever is  
50 sooner. Regulations implementing such fees, procedures and criteria  
51 shall be adopted in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54 on or  
52 before July 1, 1999. Such fees shall be comparable with rents and charges  
53 of similar properties based on fair market rates. Nothing in this  
54 subsection shall be construed to require any person who rents a venue  
55 at a state park or other facility to utilize the services of any caterer who  
56 may otherwise have a contract with the commissioner to provide  
57 catering services at such venue, provided if the caterer of such person's  
58 choice is not approved to otherwise provide such catering services at  
59 such facility, such person may provide information required by the  
60 commissioner for such approval not later than twelve months prior to  
61 the date of such rental for review and approval by the commissioner.

62 (c) The commissioner shall issue to any nonresident of the state, upon  
63 payment of a fee established by said commissioner, a nontransferable  
64 Connecticut private passenger motor vehicle pass which permits free  
65 parking throughout the calendar year at any state park, forest, boat  
66 launch or other state recreational facility, provided the commissioner  
67 shall not be required to issue such a pass to any park, forest or facility  
68 which is wholly managed by a private concessionaire and may require  
69 payment of fees for special events. Not later than May 1, 2010, said  
70 commissioner shall establish the amount of such fee for nonresidents of  
71 this state in an amount not greater than one hundred fifty per cent of the  
72 amount charged for such fee by said commissioner as of April 1, 2009.

73 (d) The commissioner shall issue to any resident of the state who is  
74 sixty-five years of age or older and to any resident of this state who is a  
75 disabled veteran, as defined in section 14-254, or under federal law,  
76 without fee, upon application of such resident, a nontransferable  
77 lifetime pass which shall permit free admission and boat access parking  
78 for use at any state park, forest or state recreational facility, provided  
79 the commissioner shall not be required to issue such a pass for use of  
80 any park, forest or facility which is wholly managed by a private  
81 concessionaire and may require payment of fees for special events.

82 (e) Notwithstanding any provision of this section, any person with a  
83 valid Connecticut motor vehicle license plate shall not pay a parking fee  
84 at any state park, forest or other state recreational facility on and after  
85 January 1, 2018.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
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Section 1	<i>October 1, 2020</i>	23-26
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**Statement of Purpose:**

To allow vendor choice for persons who rent certain state facilities.

*[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]*