
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6603

AN ACT CONCERNING TOURISM.

SUMMARY

This bill allows two or more municipalities to jointly appoint one representative to a regional tourism board of directors. Under the bill, the jointly appointed representative (1) is deemed present for each appointing municipality for purposes of a quorum at a board meeting and (2) may vote for each appointing municipality. By law, the state has three regional tourism districts (Eastern, Central, and Western). Regional tourism district boards consist of one representative from each municipality within the district, appointed by the municipality's legislative body (or board of selectmen if the legislative body is a town meeting).

The bill also adds a representative of the Connecticut Tourism Coalition to the Connecticut Tourism Council, thus increasing the council's membership from 29 to 30. The bill requires that the coalition's representative be appointed by the governor. By law, the council is within the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) for administrative purposes only. Among other things, it must (1) evaluate DECD's biennial strategic marketing plan for culture and tourism and (2) annually report to the Commerce Committee on the plan and the state's tourism promotion efforts.

Lastly, the bill establishes an 11-member task force to study the shortage of employees in various tourism-related businesses in the state (e.g., shoreline businesses and marine trades). The task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Commerce Committee by January 1, 2022. It terminates on this date or when it submits its report, whichever is later.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except that the provision

allowing for joint appointments to regional tourism boards of directors is effective October 1, 2021.

TASK FORCE

Under the bill, the task force consists of 11 members: (1) two appointees each by the governor, House speaker, and Senate president pro tempore, (2) one appointee each by the House and Senate majority and minority leaders, and (3) the DECD commissioner or his designee. Appointing authorities must make their initial appointments within 30 days after the bill's passage and fill any vacancies. Members appointed by legislative leaders may be legislators.

The bill requires the House speaker and Senate president pro tempore to select the task force's chairpersons from among its members. The chairpersons must schedule the task force's first meeting, which must be held within 60 days after the bill's passage. The Commerce Committee's administrative staff must serve as the task force's administrative staff.

The bill requires the task force to create an inventory and timeline of tourism industry employment opportunities and a mechanism for advertising these opportunities. It must also review the most efficient, cost-effective, and reliable transportation available to individuals seeking these opportunities. The task force must consult with (1) tourism-related businesses about the inventory and timelines; (2) public and private schools, local and regional chambers of commerce, and the Connecticut Tourism Council about advertising; and (3) the Department of Transportation about transportation availability.

BACKGROUND

Related Bill

sSB 3 (§ 3), reported favorably by the Commerce Committee, establishes a task force with a similar charge.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Commerce Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 22 Nay 0 (03/16/2021)