
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6647 (as amended by House "A")*

AN ACT CONCERNING GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS.

SUMMARY

This bill establishes the following entities:

1. a Geographic Information Systems Office (GISO) within the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) with a geographic information officer position to oversee the new office and its staff (§ 1) and
2. a Geographic Information Systems Advisory Council (GIS Council) to consult with the information officer on geographic information system (GIS) matters, including making GIS data free and publicly available (§ 2).

The officer is generally responsible for coordinating the collection, analysis, and accessibility of GIS data. The bill additionally makes the officer, or the officer's designee, a nonvoting member of the Connecticut Data Analysis Technology Advisory Board (§ 3).

*House Amendment "A" explicitly establishes a new office within OPM referenced in the underlying bill and modifies the information officer's role on the GIS Council; it additionally makes the information officer a non-voting member of the Connecticut Data Analysis Technology Advisory Board and modifies the eligibility requirements for voting members.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2021

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OFFICE AND OFFICER

The bill requires the OPM secretary to designate an employee to serve as a geographic information officer and to oversee the new GISO and its staff.

The bill requires the information officer to have (1) extensive knowledge of GIS and spatial data, analysis, and related technology and (2) experience in project management, administration, policy development, coordinating services, and planning.

Under the bill, the information officer must establish goals for the office in conjunction with the GIS Council established by the bill. The goals must be within the scope of the officer's powers and duties, which are to:

1. coordinate the collection and compilation of GIS data and disseminate it to state, local, and regional governmental entities and others across the state;
2. manage a geospatial data clearinghouse that is publicly accessible online through the Connecticut Open Data Portal;
3. support economic development efforts by making its data accessible;
4. provide training and outreach on its data;
5. administer the creation and acquisition of geospatial data, including aerial imagery and elevation and parcel information;
6. adopt geospatial data standards, guidelines, and procedures to ensure data consistency and quality; and
7. aggregate and organize existing data sets and create new ones.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS ADVISORY COUNCIL

Purpose

The bill establishes a GIS Council to consult with the GISO information officer on free and public GIS data matters (e.g., its procurement, storage, and distribution) and OPM's powers and duties regarding geospatial information systems under existing law (CGS § 4d-90).

The council must also (1) develop priorities, (2) annually create a

five-year plan, and (3) make recommendations on the priorities and plan to the GISO information officer.

Membership

Under the bill, the task force consists of fourteen members:

1. the GISO information officer, or the officer's designee, who serves as the task force's chairperson;
2. the chief data officer, or the officer's designee;
3. four representatives with GIS expertise, one each appointed by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Department of Transportation, Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, and Department of Public Health commissioners;
4. two representatives from different regional councils of government who have GIS and certain related expertise, appointed by the Connecticut Association of Councils of Governments chairperson;
5. two representatives from different municipalities who are members of the Connecticut GIS network and have GIS expertise, appointed by the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities president;
6. one University of Connecticut representative who has certain experience providing the state's geospatial information to various constituencies, appointed by the university president;
7. one public utility company representative, appointed by the Public Utility Regulatory Authority chairperson; and
8. two representatives from private companies (other than public utility companies) who have commercial mapping expertise, one jointly appointed by the Planning and Development Committee chairpersons and one by the ranking members.

The bill sets members' terms at two years, or until a qualified successor is appointed. Appointing authorities must make initial appointments by January 1, 2022, subsequent appointments biannually, and fill vacancies. By March 1, 2022, and at least every two years thereafter, the chairperson must convene an advisory council meeting.

CONNECTICUT DATA ANALYSIS TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY BOARD

The bill makes the GISO information officer, or the officer's designee, a non-voting member of the Connecticut Data Analysis Technology Board (i.e., a board within the Legislative Department that may, among other things, advise the three branches of state government and municipalities on data policy). Existing law specifies that the eight voting members must have professional experiences or academic qualifications in data analysis, management, or policy or related fields. The bill adds that they may qualify based on their experience or qualification in GIS.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Planning and Development Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 25 Nay 1 (03/31/2021)

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 33 Nay 16 (05/10/2021)