

# Transportation Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-241

AN ACT CONCERNING OVERSIGHT AND TRANSPARENCY AT THE  
**Title:** CONNECTICUT PORT AUTHORITY.

**Vote Date:** 3/26/2021

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Change of Reference to Appropriations

**PH Date:** 2/19/2021

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Transportation Committee  
Sen. Catherine Osten, 19<sup>th</sup> District  
Sen. Norm Needleman, 33<sup>rd</sup> District  
Rep. Anthony L. Nolan, 39<sup>th</sup> District  
Rep. Brian T. Smith, 48<sup>th</sup> District  
Rep. Christine Conley, 40<sup>th</sup> District  
Rep. Joe de la Cruz, 41<sup>st</sup> District  
Rep. David Michel, 146<sup>th</sup> District

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

This legislation would expand reporting requirements for the Connecticut Port Authority, as well as require the Department of Transportation Commissioner to outline a plan to return the CPA to function under DOT control. This would strengthen oversight and transparency and is in response to the concern of legislators over a perceived lack of transparency from the CPA in recent years.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

### **David Kooris, Chairman and Executive Director, Connecticut Port Authority:**

The proposed bill references a “review the amount of payment in lieu of taxes provided to the Connecticut Port Authority in comparison to the amount provided to other quasi-public agencies.” Please note that the CPA does not receive any payment in lieu of taxes as we are not a tax-collecting entity.

The CPA supports the representation of small ports and host communities on our Board of Directors. The Authority's enabling legislation Section 1(b) states that the Authority's appointed members shall include: "... (B) one member or employee of a local port authority; (C) one elected or appointed municipal official from a coastal municipality with a population not greater than one hundred thousand; and (D) one elected or appointed municipal official from a coastal community with a population not greater than fifty thousand." We welcome and support any recommendations from the legislature and the designated appointing authorities, regarding the best possible representation for our Board.

We welcome the opportunity to provide a formal update to you on our Small Harbor Improvement Projects Program (SHIPP), our sole mechanism for investing state resources in small port projects.

We welcome the opportunity to provide an estimate of the jobs that will be created during our proposed construction project at State Pier in New London as well as the jobs to be created by our private partners during their utilization of the upgraded State Pier facility from 2022-2031, 2 as compared to the employees of the private companies with operations at State Pier prior to 2021.

We welcome the opportunity to provide updates to this committee on any of the aspects of our operations but we request that this request for status updates and reporting be made more specific to ensure accurate reporting and it be clearly differentiated from the annual reports that we are already required to submit.

We believe strongly that the creation of the CPA and our singular focus on the state's maritime infrastructure and economy have enabled us to advance projects in multiple ports and harbors and seize opportunities that far exceed the level of success achieved when the maritime functions were located within the Department of Transportation (DOT). We believe that maintaining a quasi-government agency with our mission is more beneficial to the state than rolling us into DOT.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Nicole Doukas, Resident, Groton:** Concerned with some of the CPA's activity and supports more oversight.

**Christopher Fryxell, President, Associated Builders & Contractors, CT Chapter:** Has concerns regarding the contracting standards being followed by the CPA on the State Pier Redevelopment Project and asks that they be held to the same standards for such projects as other government entities.

**Dave Pohorlyo, Board Member, CPA:** Applauds the efforts made by the CPA to improve their efforts towards transparency in recent years. However, he testifies that the CPA still has room to grow in terms of transparency, and believes other changes are needed in order for the CPA to improve, such as decreasing the number of board members.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None offered.

**Reported by: Justin Kaiser**

**Date: 4/5/2021**