AN ACT CONCERNING VOTING REQUIREMENTS FOR ESTABLISHING A DISTRICT TO MAINTAIN WATER QUALITY IN A LAKE OR LAKES.

SUMMARY

This bill makes it easier to create a special taxing district to maintain water quality in a lake or lakes located within a single town by (1) lowering the threshold of votes needed to approve the district’s creation and (2) expanding who may vote to do so.

Specifically, the bill allows a simple majority of referendum or special meeting voters to approve the district’s creation, rather than a two-thirds majority as required under current law. The bill also expands voter eligibility for these districts to include any real property owner within the proposed district.

The bill also makes technical and conforming changes to special taxing district statutes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2021

EXPANDED VOTING ELIGIBILITY

By law, a person can vote at a meeting or referendum to create a district if he or she is either:

1. an elector of the municipality (i.e., a registered voter), or

2. a U.S. citizen age 18 or older who is liable, or would be but for certain tax exemptions, to the municipality for taxes on an assessment of at least $1,000.

The latter group includes (1) nonresident property owners and (2) resident property owners age 18 or older who are not registered voters.
Under the bill, at a meeting or referendum concerning the creation of a district to maintain lake water quality for a lake or lakes located within a single town, eligible voters also include any owners of real property located in the proposed district, regardless of their citizenship status, age, or tax liability.

BACKGROUND

Special Taxing Districts

The residents of an area within a municipality can form a special taxing district to perform a number of services, including providing police and fire protection, operating recreational facilities, and collecting garbage (CGS § 7-324 et seq.). The statutes specify the process for forming a special taxing district. Residents of the proposed district may establish a district either at a special meeting called for that purpose or through a referendum.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Planning and Development Committee

Joint Favorable
Yea 20  Nay 6  (03/02/2021)