
OLR Bill Analysis

HB 5353 (as amended by House "A")*

AN ACT AUTHORIZING CERTAIN MUNICIPALITIES TO ESTABLISH TRAFFIC AUTHORITIES.

SUMMARY

This bill allows certain municipalities to establish a separate entity to serve as their local traffic authority (LTA) instead of the board of police commissioners or other entity current law prescribes. It allows any municipality with a population of at least 50,000 to establish, by a vote of its legislative body, a separate traffic authority and appoint one or more members to serve on it.

An LTA established under the bill replaces the entity currently filling this role in the municipality and has all the powers and duties the law assigns to LTAs (see BACKGROUND). Legislative bodies that establish one must also set members' required qualifications, terms, and compensation, if any. The bill specifies that municipalities may establish an LTA regardless of whether the municipality's charter or home rule ordinance, or a special act states otherwise.

The bill also makes technical and minor changes.

*House Amendment "A" allows municipalities to establish an LTA described by the bill regardless of whether the municipality's charter or home rule ordinance, or a special act, states otherwise.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

ENTITIES DESIGNATED AS A TRAFFIC AUTHORITY

As shown in the table below, current law designates different local bodies or officials to serve as a municipality's LTA, depending mainly on whether the municipality has a board of police commissioners. The bill allows these municipalities (with 50,000 or more people; see

BACKGROUND) to alternatively establish a separate traffic authority, regardless of whether the municipality has a board of police commissioners.

Under existing law, unchanged by the bill, the Office of the State Traffic Administration (OSTA) is the traffic authority for state roads and bridges and has authority over certain elements specified in law (e.g., traffic control signals).

Table: Entities Current Law Designates as LTAs

Jurisdiction	Designated Entity
City, town, or borough with police commissioners	Board of police commissioners
City, town, or borough without commissioners, but with a regularly appointed police force	City or town manager, police chief, police superintendent, or any elected or appointed official or board having similar powers and duties
Town without a city or borough that has a regularly appointed police force	Board of selectmen

BACKGROUND

Authority of the Local Traffic Authority

With respect to streets under their jurisdiction, the law generally gives LTAs authority (in some cases only with OSTA approval) to, among other things, (1) place and maintain traffic control signals, signs, markings, and other safety devices following OSTA regulations (CGS § 14-298); (2) set speed limits on roads and bridges, under certain conditions (CGS § 14-218a); (3) designate school zones (in which fines for certain violations may be doubled) and pedestrian safety zones (CGS §§ 14-212b & -307a); (4) designate one-way streets (CGS § 14-303); (5) allow golf carts to be driven on streets during daylight hours (CGS § 14-300g); and (6) adopt regulations necessary to exercise its authority (CGS § 14-312).

Authorized Municipalities

The Department of Public Health's most recent population estimates (2021) list the following 19 municipalities as having populations of at least 50,000: Bridgeport, Bristol, Danbury, East Hartford, Fairfield,

Greenwich, Hamden, Hartford, Manchester, Meriden, Milford, New Britain, New Haven, Norwalk, Stamford, Stratford, Waterbury, West Hartford, and West Haven.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Planning and Development Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 17 Nay 4 (03/20/2023)

Transportation Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 25 Nay 11 (04/19/2023)