

Commerce Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5432

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP A PLAN FOR EXPANDING THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IN THE MYSTIC SEAPORT AREA OF

Title: THE TOWNS OF STONINGTON AND GROTON.

Vote Date: 3/26/2024

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/14/2024

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

REP. BAUMGARDNER
SEN. SOMERS

REASONS FOR BILL:

The Mystic Seaport area, stands as a beacon for tourism, attracting visitors from far and wide. This legislation seeks to address this challenge by establishing a working group dedicated to developing a comprehensive plan for expanding the tourism industry in the Mystic Seaport area.

Substitute Language: LCO NO. 3469

Amend section 1 to add "Effective from passage."

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Zane, Ashley, Senior Public Policy Associate-CBIA-Supports

Ms. Zane is in support of HB-5432 and believes this bill is an economic development driver that will undoubtedly produce a return on investment for our small businesses. Stonington, Groton, and the entire region will benefit from a well-designed plan with input from all stakeholders.

Lenda, Rachel, Director-CT Office of Tourism (DECD)-Supports

Ms. Lenda is in support of HB-5432 and believes efforts towards cohesion in the tourism ecosystem will welcome any opportunity to expand tourism efforts in that area.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Armstrong, Peter, President, and CEO-Mystic Seaport Museum-Supports

Mr. Armstrong is in support of HB-5432 and believes this bill takes an initial step in the right direction, but needs to be modified to ensure that other entities are a part of the conversation

Bumgardner, Aundre, State Representative-Supports

Mr. Bumgardner is in support of HB-5432 and believes a task force or commission focused on intermodal transportation improvements, investing in resilience infrastructure, and prioritizing tourism in Mystic, Connecticut will benefit Ct's overall economy.

Chesebrough, Danielle, First Selectman-Town of Stonington-Supports

Ms. Chesebrough is in support of HB-5432 and believes it will have a positive impact across the State as it helps position Southeastern CT as an important hub for tourism that connects people with cultural, historical and educational assets.

Couch, Tina, Chief Advancement Office-Mystic Aquarium

Ms. Couch is in support of HB-5432 and believes that the working group created from this legislation should include representatives from a range of stakeholders, including local businesses, residents, and tourism organizations. Through this they can maximize the potential of this initiative and ensure the long-term prosperity of our region's tourism sector.

Figuroa, Nathaniel, Student-Supports

Germoso, Steffi, Student-Maritime Adventure Program-Supports

Veltheim, Grayson, Student-Maritime Adventure Program-Supports

These 3 students support HB-5432 as the maritime program has developed leadership, self-confidence, and other helpful skills.

Kleckner, Ellen, Coordinator of Youth Services-New London Youth Affairs-Supports

Ms. Kleckner is in support of HB-5432 and believes this bill will have an effect across the State as it helps position the area as a leading tourism and community hub. New London Youth Affairs has worked in partnership with the Mystic Seaport Museum for the past few years, and during that time has partnered to employ local teens at the Seaport's Maritime Adventure program.

Robinson, William, Director-The Light House-Supports

Mr. Robinson is in support of HB-5432 and believes it will have an effect across the State as it helps position the area as a leading tourism and community hub.

Tibus, Susette, President and CEO-Mystic Aquarium

Ms. Tibus is in support of HB-5432 and believes HB 5432 takes an initial step in the right direction. Ms. Tibus urges the committee to consider broadening the scope of the proposed working group to encompass a more comprehensive area and ensure diverse representation within the group.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Hassan Ismail

04/02/2024