



2023 Acts Affecting Municipalities

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Notice to Readers

This report provides summaries of new laws (public acts and special acts) significantly affecting the municipalities enacted during the 2023 regular session and September 26 Special Session. OLR's other Acts Affecting reports, including Acts Affecting Education, Acts Affecting Crime and Public Safety, and Acts Affecting Town Clerks and Elections, are, or will soon be, available on OLR's website: <https://www.cga.ct.gov/olr/actsaffecting.asp>.

Each summary indicates the public act (PA) or special act (SA) number. Not all provisions of the acts are included. The report does not include vetoed acts unless the veto was overridden. Complete summaries of public acts are, or will soon be, available on OLR's website: <https://www.cga.ct.gov/olr/olrsums.asp>.

Readers are encouraged to obtain the full text of acts that interest them from the Connecticut State Library, House Clerk's Office, or General Assembly's website: <http://www.cga.ct.gov>.

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Animal Control and Cruelty

Animal Control Officers and Temporary Animal Care Expenses

This session the legislature passed a law allowing animal control officers (ACOs), when an animal is found to be neglected or cruelly treated, to seek a court order to require the animal's owner to provide necessary care for the animal. Under existing law, the court may require that the animal's owner pay for, among other things, the expenses a municipality incurred for the animal's temporary care and custody. The new law also increases the per diem rate that the owner must pay, from \$15 to \$20 (and, for horses and other large livestock, from \$25 to \$30), and requires the animal's owner or other responsible person to pay for all veterinary costs incurred for the animal's welfare while in temporary custody ([PA 23-17](#), §1, effective upon passage).

Black Bears and Other Potentially Dangerous Animals

A new law bans intentionally feeding potentially dangerous animals (e.g., bear, bobcat, coyote, or fox) on land not owned by the state and makes doing so an infraction. It does not preempt (i.e., replace) a municipal ordinance that is more restrictive about intentional feeding of wildlife, though. It also explicitly allows a person to kill a black bear if the person reasonably believes the bear is (1) inflicting, or about to inflict, great bodily harm to a person; (2) injuring or killing the person's controlled pet; or (3) entering a building occupied with people ([PA 23-77](#), effective October 1, 2023).

Dog Pound Requirements

A new law generally requires municipal or regional dog pounds to have mechanical heating and cooling systems that can maintain an indoor ambient temperature between 55 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit. It also imposes additional rules on how these pounds may keep dogs and cats (e.g., generally prohibiting kittens and puppies from being kept with adult cats and dogs) and authorizes the agriculture commissioner to enforce the new provisions.

By law, the commissioner may inspect dog pounds and other facilities where domestic animals are kept and issue orders to correct any deficiencies found. The new law requires him to give municipal ACOs an inspection report with findings within five days after an inspection. The ACO must give a copy of the report to the municipality's chief elected official and police department or ACO supervisor within 30 days after receiving it ([PA 23-138](#), various effective dates).

Local Kennels

A new law renames a kennel license as a "local kennel license" and requires this license when breeding more than five, instead of two, litters of dogs annually. (A person applies to the town clerk

for this license.) The new law disqualifies anyone who is guilty of animal cruelty from holding a local kennel license. It also directs how municipalities may spend the local kennel license fees they collect, allows municipal and regional ACOs to inspect kennels annually, and generally reduces penalties on violating kennel requirements ([PA 23-17](#), § 3, as amended by [PA 23-187](#), § 29, effective upon passage).

Monthly ACO Reporting

This session the legislature modified a law that requires municipal ACOs to report monthly to the town or region's chief administrative officer on the official duties and services the ACO performed in the prior month. The new law (1) removes a requirement for the ACOs to include a sworn statement in the report; (2) requires the ACOs to send the report to the Department of Agriculture (DoAg) commissioner (under prior law, the administrative officer had to forward it to the commissioner); and (3) requires DoAg to prescribe the form on which the ACOs report the information ([PA 23-17](#), § 2, effective upon passage).

Sexual Assault

A new law makes it a class A misdemeanor to sexually assault an animal. Among other things, the new law also authorizes:

1. law enforcement officers and ACOs to take possession of an animal when the officer has a reasonable belief that an animal was sexually assaulted and
2. state, municipal, or regional ACOs to take physical custody of an animal when the officer has reasonable cause to believe, or upon issuance of a warrant finding probable cause, that the animal has been treated cruelly, including sexually assaulted ([PA 23-149](#), §§ 1, 4 & 5, effective October 1, 2023).

Blight and Littering

Abandoned and Blighted Property Receiverships

Prior law provided a judicial process to appoint a receiver to rehabilitate and dispose of abandoned properties in municipalities with populations of at least 35,000. This session, the legislature lowered the population threshold, making the process available in any municipality with at least 15,000 people ([PA 23-33](#), § 1, effective October 1, 2023).

Enterprise Zone Program and Blight Elimination

A new law expands the enterprise zone program's goal of eliminating housing blight to include eliminating any blight. By law, the enterprise zone program offers various tax incentives and other

benefits to businesses that start up in or improve real property in areas designated as enterprise zones ([PA 23-33](#), § 5, effective October 1, 2023).

Increased State Fine for Littering

State law prohibits littering on public land or public property, in state waters, or on private property not owned by the litterer. A violator was previously subject to a fine of up to \$199, plus a 50% surcharge, if the littering was on public land. A new law raises the maximum fine to \$500, excluding the surcharge ([PA 23-33](#), § 6, effective October 1, 2023).

Notice to Lienholder Related to Property Maintenance Violations

Under prior law, a blanket provision required municipalities to notify a lienholder about any notice or order to a property owner to dispose of real estate or make it safe and sanitary. Municipalities had to similarly inform lienholders when they (1) incur costs to dispose of the property or make it safe and sanitary or (2) record a lien for these costs on the land records. A new law eliminates these broadly applicable notice requirements for lienholders if the notice is about making property safe and sanitary but not about disposing of it ([PA 23-33](#), § 8, effective October 1, 2023).

State and Local Enforcement of Blight Violations

A new law broadly expands state and local authority to regulate blight to include regulating blighted commercial properties. It also (1) increases the municipally imposed civil penalties for blight ordinance violations from a daily maximum of \$100 to \$1,000 under certain circumstances, (2) allows municipalities to correct violations without providing notice and an opportunity for correction if a property is cited at least three times in 12 months, and (3) eliminates the option to pay the state blight fine (up to \$250 per day) through the Superior Court's Centralized Infractions Bureau ([PA 23-33](#), §§ 2-4 & 7, effective October 1, 2023).

Tire Stewardship Program

This session, the legislature added tires to the list of discarded products to be managed by a statewide stewardship program. Under the new law, tire producers or their designees must join a stewardship organization responsible for developing a plan to implement the program. Those failing to participate in a program are prohibited from supplying, selling, or offering tires for sale in Connecticut.

Among other things, the tire program must, if technologically feasible and economically practical, manage a collection system with free public access using entities like municipal transfer stations, retailers, and dealerships ([PA 23-62](#), effective October 1, 2023).

Building and Construction

Concrete Aggregate Testing

Existing law requires the operator of a quarry that produces concrete aggregate to prepare and update a geological source report and submit it to the state geologist and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner. It also requires the operator of a quarry that sells or provides aggregate intended for use in concrete to annually give the state a written report with the results of a third-party test of the aggregate's sulfur content and further testing for pyrrhotite, if applicable. A new law establishes similar testing requirements and sales restrictions for aggregate producers that process coarse aggregate for use in residential or commercial concrete foundations, when the aggregate has not been tested under the laws applicable to quarries ([PA 23-185](#), effective upon passage).

Diaper Changing Tables in New or Renovated Public Buildings

This session, the legislature passed a law requiring the next proposed revision to the State Building Code to include a requirement that certain newly constructed or substantially renovated public buildings (e.g., state, municipal, religious, and educational buildings), among other places, have safe, sanitary, and convenient baby diaper changing tables if the building includes a public restroom ([PA 23-72](#), effective upon passage).

Major Traffic Generator Certificates

By law, entities that are building, expanding, or establishing certain major traffic generating developments must get a certificate from the Office of the State Traffic Administration (OSTA), and local building officials may not issue a building or foundation permit to these entities until they show their certificate. A new law additionally prohibits local building officials from issuing a certificate of occupancy for these developments until conditions of the OSTA certificate have been met. By law, OSTA may (1) order entities who have not met conditions listed in the certificate to stop development and (2) bring action in court if the conditions are not met ([PA 23-135](#), §§ 3 & 4, effective July 1, 2023).

Online Building Permit Applications

A new law explicitly authorizes municipalities to accept electronically submitted building permit applications from contractors, aligning the law's building permit signature requirements with existing practice ([PA 23-114](#), effective October 1, 2023).

State Historic Preservation Officer Working Group

A new law establishes a working group to (1) study the State Historic Preservation Officer's (SHPO) role in administering historic preservation review processes related to the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA) and (2) make certain related legislative recommendations, including for a municipal appeals process for determinations SHPO makes under CEPA on the renovation or rehabilitation of historic buildings or properties. The working group must submit a report with its recommendations to the Commerce Committee by February 1, 2024 ([PA 23-204](#), § 69, and [SA 23-15](#), effective upon passage).

Stop Work Orders & Penalties for Hindering an Investigation

This year the legislature broadened the labor commissioner's authority to issue stop work orders to include instances when a contractor or subcontractor knowingly or willfully pays an employee less than the prevailing wage required on a public works project (including a municipal project). The new law also increases the (1) civil penalty for violating a stop work order from \$1,000 to \$5,000 for each day that an order is violated and (2) fine for hindering an investigation of complaints about the prevailing wage, nonpayment of wages, or a failure to provide workers' compensation insurance coverage, from a \$150-\$250 fine, to a fine of at least \$1,000 ([PA 23-162](#), effective October 1, 2023).

Task Force on Building Inspection Timeliness

A new seven-member task force will study the timeliness of building inspections required for building permits and report its findings and recommendations to the legislature by January 1, 2024. Among other things, the task force will (1) review the average time it takes for inspections to be done after the work is ready to be inspected; (2) examine the frequency with which scheduled inspections are cancelled or rescheduled, and if possible, which party did so; and (3) recommend initiatives to (a) incentivize or attract additional inspectors to Connecticut and (b) increase inspection timeliness ([PA 23-204](#), § 387, effective upon passage).

Elections

Language Assistance

The General Assembly adopted legislation requiring certain municipalities, as determined by the secretary of the state, to provide language-related assistance in voting and elections. This may include providing certain paperwork in another language, such as registration or voting notices, forms, instructions, ballots, or other information about the voting process. The secretary must require a municipality to provide this assistance if at least a certain percentage or number of its population speaks a particular language other than English and may have difficulty communicating

in English. The legislation also allows certain individuals and groups to petition the secretary to require municipalities to offer language assistance in languages that do not meet the thresholds above ([PA 23-204](#), § 413, effective January 1, 2024).

Preclearance for Certain Changes to Covered Policies and Election Laws

Under a new law, the secretary of the state must annually identify jurisdictions that must get preclearance from the secretary or a state court before they enact changes to certain election laws and covered policies (e.g., election methods; forms of government; dissolving, consolidating, or dividing municipalities (including districts); or polling locations). The secretary determines which jurisdictions are subject to preclearance based on their past compliance with state and federal elections laws, violations of civil rights laws, and specified indicators of inequities regarding voting participation and arrests of protected classes within the jurisdiction.

Under the law, a “protected class” is a class of citizens who are members of a race, color, or language minority group, as referenced in the federal Voting Rights Act ([PA 23-204](#), § 414, effective January 1, 2024).

Prohibition on Certain Municipal Election Practices

A new law prohibits municipalities from (1) employing election methods in municipal elections that dilute the vote of protected class members or (2) imposing certain practices or policies in a way that impairs protected class members’ right to vote. It authorizes certain individuals and groups to (1) notify and negotiate with municipalities to address violations or (2) file suit in state court against municipalities that employ these methods or impose these practices and policies and, if they prevail, receive attorney’s fees and litigation costs ([PA 23-204](#), §§ 410, 411 and 418, effective July 1, 2023).

Terms of Elected Municipal Officials

A new law extends municipal elected officials’ terms to conform to the beginning of the succeeding term when an election date change would otherwise cause the term to expire before the next regular election. Under prior law, terms that were set to expire before the next regular election because of an election date change were extended to the date of that election. Existing law allows conforming extensions or reductions to an incumbent’s term if the beginning of a term is shifted (e.g., due to a change in law) (CGS § 9-187a) ([PA 23-1](#), September Special Session, § 1, effective October 1, 2023).

Employee Benefits and Compensation

Connecticut Municipal Employees Retirement System

This session, the legislature made several changes to the Connecticut Municipal Employees Retirement System (CMERS). For CMERS members who retire on or after July 1, 2025, the new law primarily:

1. changes the range of potential cost of living adjustments (COLAs) to pension benefits by increasing the maximum COLA from 6.0% to 7.5% and phasing out the 2.5% minimum COLA;
2. requires a minimum one-year waiting period for a retiree's first COLA; and
3. creates a pension incentive for CMERS members to continue working past age 60 with at least 30 years of service (or age 55 with 27 years of service for police and firefighters).

The new law also (1) temporarily rescinds authorization for the State Retirement Commission to create a deferred retirement option plan (which, in practice, it has not created) for CMERS members, and reinstates this authority starting on July 1, 2025, and (2) requires all municipalities to give the state comptroller certain information about their retirement systems by September 1, 2023, so that the comptroller and certain other state officials can prepare a report on the best practices for municipal retirement plans by July 1, 2024 ([PA 23-182](#), effective upon passage).

Firefighters Cancer Relief Benefits

A new law generally requires that firefighters who have certain cancers and meet other specified criteria receive workers' compensation-like benefits and disability retirement benefits. The benefits must be paid by the municipality where the eligible firefighter is employed and then reimbursed to the municipality from the state's firefighters cancer relief account. The new law also, among other things, prohibits any firefighter who receives compensation under the law from filing a workers' compensation claim for a cancer diagnosis unless the firefighters cancer relief account becomes insolvent ([PA 23-204](#), §§ 159-162, most provisions effective October 1, 2023).

“Portal-to-Portal” Coverage for 9-1-1 Emergency Dispatchers

A new law gives “portal-to-portal” workers' compensation coverage to telecommunicators (i.e., 9-1-1 emergency dispatchers) in three situations: (1) when they are subject to emergency calls while off duty by the terms of their employment, (2) when they are responding to a direct order to appear at their work assignment when nonessential employees are excused from working, or (3) after working two or more mandatory overtime shifts on consecutive days. With “portal-to-portal” coverage, an injury that occurs while the employee is travelling directly between his or her home and workplace is deemed to have occurred in the course of the employee's employment, making him or her

eligible to receive workers' compensation benefits for the injury ([PA 23-80](#), effective October 1, 2023).

Public School Operator and Health Care Benefit Agreements

Under a new law, the legislature expanded the types of public school operators that can join in health care benefit agreements with other school operators or municipalities. Prior law allowed a school board or a municipality to join with other school boards or municipalities through a written agreement to form a single entity to provide medical or health care benefits for their employees. The new law expands what kinds of entities can participate by allowing “public school operators” to be part of these agreements. It defines “public school operator” as a local or regional board of education, a regional educational service center, the governing council of a state or local charter school, or an operator of a magnet school program, as described in law ([PA 23-160](#), § 42, effective July 1, 2023).

Firearms

Access to Juvenile Delinquency Records

By law, juvenile delinquency case records are generally, with specified exceptions, confidential and for the juvenile court's use. A new law gives municipal, state, and federal agency employees and authorized agents access to juvenile delinquency case records to evaluate a proposed firearm transfer to someone under age 21, as the federal Bipartisan Safer Communities Act requires ([PA 23-25](#), effective July 1, 2023).

Fingerprinting for Handgun Permits

This session the legislature repealed a provision that allowed a handgun permit issuing authority (e.g., local police chief) to forgo taking an applicant's fingerprints if (1) they determined that the applicant's fingerprints were already taken and (2) the applicant presented identification that they determine is valid ([PA 23-130](#), § 3, effective July 1, 2023).

Firearm Permitting Functions Performed by Municipal CEOs

Under a 2022 act, the chief executive officer (CEO) of any municipality (i.e., town, city, consolidated town and city, borough, or consolidated town and borough) without a police chief may perform various firearms permitting and administrative functions or designate the resident state trooper or relevant state police officer to do so. (Under prior law, only a town's first selectman or borough's warden were authorized to perform these functions.) A new law defines a municipal CEO for these purposes as the (1) first selectman; (2) chief administrative officer appointed by the board of

selectmen or mayor; (3) mayor; (4) borough warden; or (5) appointed town, city, or borough manager ([PA 23-130](#), §§ 1 & 2, effective July 1, 2023).

Gun Violence Community Roundtables

New legislation requires each municipal law enforcement unit, starting by October 1, 2023, to hold a quarterly public meeting with stakeholders who also serve the municipality to work towards reducing gun violence and crime. Units may hold meetings more or less frequently if a unit's chief, the municipality's CEO, and the municipality's civilian police review board, if any, agree to it. For stakeholder meetings, each municipal law enforcement unit must invite at least (1) one prosecutor who serves in the judicial district that includes the municipality and (2) representatives from social services and mental health agencies and organizations serving the municipality, organizations combatting gun violence in the municipality, and the judicial branch ([PA 23-146](#), effective upon passage).

Project Longevity

The "Project Longevity Initiative" is a comprehensive, community-based initiative to reduce gun violence in the state's cities. A new law expands this initiative by (1) making its goal to reduce gun violence in all the state's municipalities, not only its cities, and (2) requiring its implementation in Norwich and New London in addition to Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, and Waterbury.

As under existing law, the new law requires the chief court administrator to (1) provide planning and management assistance to municipal officials and (2) do anything necessary to apply for and accept federal funds allotted or available to the state under any federal act or program ([PA 23-204](#), § 56, effective July 1, 2023).

Grants and Funding

Body and Dashboard Camera and Equipment Grant Extension

The Body Worn Camera and Dashboard Camera Grant Program provides, within available funding, grants to approved municipalities for purchasing eligible police body cameras, digital data storage devices or services, and certain dashboard cameras, among other things. This session, the legislature extended the program through FY 25 ([PA 23-204](#), § 99, effective upon passage).

Climate Resiliency Funds

A new law authorizes municipal treasurers to invest a municipality's Climate Change and Coastal Resiliency Reserve Fund in any trust fund the state treasurer administers, holds, or invests ([PA 23-140](#), effective upon passage).

COG Grant Formula

Beginning FY 25, new legislation requires the Office of Policy Management (OPM) secretary to annually distribute \$7 million from the regional planning incentive account to regional councils of government (COGs) as grants. Prior law did not specify the total grant distribution amount but did specify a per-COG grant formula, which the new legislation modifies.

The new legislation requires the OPM secretary, in consultation with the COGs, to determine the per-COG grant formula, which must include a base payment plus a per capita amount. The formula must be reviewed and updated every five years after its initial adoption. Under prior law, the grant amount was set at \$185,500 plus 68 cents per person per COG ([PA 23-204](#), § 93, and [PA 23-205](#), § 155, both effective July 1, 2023).

DMHAS Mental Health Services Program Grant

The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), in collaboration with regional behavioral action organizations, administers a grant program for hospitals, municipalities, and nonprofit organizations to expand or maintain their psychiatric or mental health services. A new law allows grant funds to be used for building construction or renovation, which prior law prohibited ([PA 23-204](#), § 289, effective upon passage).

Farmland Restoration Grant Program

A new law revises the Farmland Restoration Grant Program in various ways. For example, it removes a \$20,000 cap on grants, including eliminating a cap for plans related to state-owned land or municipally owned land with an agricultural lease of five years or longer.

By law, the DoAg commissioner may pay or reimburse certain entities (i.e., a municipality, nonprofit organization, soil and water conservation district, or UConn Extension Services) for a variety of services (e.g., technical assistance and other services designed to increase the number of farmers implementing climate-smart agriculture and forestry practices). Under the new law, the commissioner can make these payments or reimbursements within available appropriations, but advance payments cannot exceed 50% of the cost and the total state grant cannot be more than 90% of the cost ([PA 23-184](#), § 1, effective October 1, 2023).

Farm Viability Grant Program Renamed

A new law renames the Farm Viability Grant Program as the Agricultural Enhancement Grant Program. DoAg administers this matching grant program to further agriculture in the state. The

program is open to municipalities, groups of municipalities, regional councils of governments, and agricultural non-profits ([PA 23-184](#), § 4, effective upon passage).

Flood Damage Assistance for Hartford Residents

A new law requires the comptroller to establish the Hartford Sewerage System Repair and Improvement Fund, which may contain public or private funds, and requires the fund to be used to administer and operate a grant program providing (1) assistance to eligible owners of real property in Hartford to pay for repairs required by flood damage caused on or after January 1, 2021, and (2) reimbursement to residents for costs associated with damage to personal property due to flooding occurring on or after that date ([PA 23-204](#), §§ 142-144, effective upon passage).

High Poverty-Low Opportunity Census Tracts Grants

This year's bond act requires the Department of Economic and Community Development commissioner to establish a grant program to fund eligible projects in "high poverty-low opportunity census tracts." Under the act, these are census tracts in which at least 30% of the residents have incomes below the federal poverty level, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's most recent five-year American Community Survey. The act also authorizes general obligation (GO) bonds of up to \$50 million per year from FYs 24-29 (\$300 million total) for the program.

An eligible project must seek to reduce concentrated poverty and its effects within the qualifying census tract. These projects generally include (1) building, renovating, and rehabilitating mixed-income rental and owner-occupied housing; (2) establishing or improving workforce development programs; and (3) building, renovating, or rehabilitating public infrastructure to support and improve private investment opportunities, quality of life, and public safety ([PA 23-205](#), §§ 101-102, effective July 1, 2023).

LoCIP Funds Distribution

The Local Capital Improvement Program (LoCIP) is an OPM-administered grant program that allocates funding, based on a statutory formula, to municipalities for costs they incur for eligible local capital improvement projects. This session, the legislature changed this process to require the OPM secretary to distribute each municipality's total LoCIP allocation by June 30 each year, rather than reimbursing them for their spending on eligible projects. It correspondingly requires municipalities to annually report to OPM on how they spent their grants for the prior fiscal year ([PA 23-124](#), effective upon passage).

LoCIP Funds for Tree Removal or Trimming

In addition to the amount granted by the existing statutory formula for LoCIP reimbursement, a new law requires OPM, for FYs 24 and 25, to authorize expense reimbursements for hazardous tree removal or trimming projects from funds appropriated to OPM for this purpose. It also applies to hazardous tree removal or trimming projects the existing exemption to allow for reimbursement of projects that are not consistent with the local capital improvement plan as long as the municipality is taking steps to amend the plan to include them ([PA 23-190](#), effective July 1, 2023).

Microgrid and Resilience Project Funding

A new law expands eligibility to participate in the Microgrid and Resilience Grant and Loan Program to include any local or regional governmental entity (rather than just municipalities), municipal corporation, regional council of government, public authority, or state and federally recognized tribe. The act allows the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, which administers the program, to award program grants or loans, rather than requiring it, as under prior law. It also eliminates a requirement for DEEP to distribute program funds evenly between small, medium, and large municipalities to the extent possible. The program generally provides funding to develop microgrid distributed energy generation, repurpose existing distributed energy generation to use with microgrids, support critical facilities, or develop resilience projects ([PA 23-157](#), effective July 1, 2023).

Nip Surcharge Use Review

A provision in a new law requires the Council on Environmental Quality to include in the annual environmental quality report it submits to the governor a review of the programs and measures local governments implemented with funds received from the state's five-cent per nip surcharge ([PA 23-76](#), § 1, effective upon passage).

Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program Grants

The Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program gives state grants to municipalities, land trusts, and water companies to buy land to be permanently preserved as open space. A new law creates an exception to the general program rule that grants cannot be made for land that is already committed for public use. Under the new law, land will not be considered already committed for public use if it is subject to a conservation easement or restriction that resulted from a federally funded land conservation program or a municipal or private conservation grant program before the state's permanent conservation easement is recorded ([PA 23-196](#), §§ 10 & 11, effective upon passage).

Opioid Settlement Fund

Advisory Committee

A new law increases, from 37 to 45, the membership of the Opioid Settlement Fund Advisory Committee, including by increasing the number of governor-appointed municipal representatives from 17 to 21. By law, the committee ensures (1) Opioid Settlement Fund moneys are allocated and spent on specified substance use disorder abatement purposes and (2) public involvement, accountability, and transparency in allocating and accounting for the fund's moneys ([PA 23-97](#), § 35, effective July 1, 2023).

Funds to Equip Police with Opioid Antagonists

The FY 24-25 budget and implementer act expands the purposes for which the Opioid Settlement Fund may be used to include providing funds to municipal police departments to equip officers with opioid antagonists. Under the act, priority for these funds must be given to departments that do not currently have a supply of them ([PA 23-204](#), § 184, effective July 1, 2023).

Reporting

Legislation enacted this session requires municipalities that receive opioid settlement funds directly from a settlement administrator to annually report to the state's Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee on their expenditures for the prior year. The committee must publish the reports on its website. Under the act, municipalities must start annually reporting by October 1, 2023, and do so until they spend all their settlement funds ([PA 23-92](#), §§ 2 & 3, effective July 1, 2023).

PFAS Contamination & Remediation

A new law establishes an account in the General Fund to be used for grants or reimbursements for municipalities to test for and remediate PFAS (perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substance) contamination in drinking water supplies ([PA 23-74](#), effective July 1, 2023). This year's bond act includes authorizations for up to \$3 million in FY 24 and up to \$2 million in FY 24 for this purpose and to buyback firefighting foam with PFAS ([PA 23-205](#), §§ 13 & 32, effective July 1, 2023, for the FY 24 authorization, and July 1, 2024, for the FY 25 authorization).

Prorated PILOT Grants

By law, if the amount appropriated for payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) grants is not enough to fully fund them according to the statutory reimbursement rates, the grant amounts must be prorated according to a three-tiered proration method. (OPM generally determines each municipality's and district's tier designation based on its per capita property wealth, with certain exceptions.) The FY 24-25 budget and implementer act increases these tiered PILOT grant rates by three percentage points, from 50% to 53%, 40% to 43%, and 30% to 33% ([PA 23-204](#), § 139, effective July 1, 2023).

Public Library Construction Grants

This session, a new law increases the maximum grant amounts allowed for public library construction projects. Prior law authorized the State Library Board to award grants for public library construction for up to one-half of a project's total construction costs, subject to a \$1 million per project cap. For project applications submitted on or after July 1, 2023, the new law increases the (1) grant amount allowed for projects in distressed municipalities to up to 80% of the total construction costs and (2) maximum grant allowed for any project to \$2 million. The new law also authorizes state general obligation bonds of up to \$5 million per year for FYs 24-25 for these grants ([PA 23-205](#), §§ 13(h), 32(g) & 60, effective July 1, 2023).

Public Library Grants and Collection Policy

A new law prohibits any principal public library (i.e., the library a municipality designates as its "main" library) from receiving state grants unless it maintains and adheres to collection development, collection management, and collection reconsideration policies that have been approved by the library's governing body. The collection reconsideration policy must offer residents a clear process to request a reconsideration of library materials. The act specifies that if there is a book challenge, these policies must govern ([PA 23-101](#), § 2, effective July 1, 2023).

Recreational Trail Funding

The annual bond act authorizes up to \$20 million in new bonding for DEEP to use for the bikeway, pedestrian walkway, recreational trail, and greenway grant program. By law, this program provides grants to certain entities, including municipalities, for such things as planning, design, acquiring land, and construction ([PA 23-205](#), § 64, effective July 1, 2023).

Rural Speed Enforcement Grant Program Expansion

Existing law requires the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection to administer a municipal grant program for speed enforcement activities on rural roads. Municipalities eligible for grants under prior law were those with a population of less than 25,000 and that have a law enforcement unit or resident state trooper. New legislation removes the requirement that these municipalities have a law enforcement unit or resident state trooper. Program grants are capped at \$5,000, but eligible municipalities may receive up to 10 grants ([PA 23-204](#), § 52, effective July 1, 2023).

Transfer of Municipal Grants from MRSA to MRSF

New legislation makes certain municipal grants payable from the Municipal Revenue Sharing Fund (MRSF), rather than the Municipal Revenue Sharing Account (MRSA). Specifically, it requires OPM

to use MRSF funds to pay the (1) motor vehicle property tax grants; (2) PILOT grants, including those known as Tiered PILOT, and additional PILOTs paid to specified municipalities; and (3) supplemental revenue sharing grants, the amounts of which it specifies for municipalities and fire districts. Beginning July 1, 2023 (FY 24), the law correspondingly diverts 7.9% of the state's sales and use tax revenue to MRSF, rather than MRSA ([PA 23-204](#), §§ 73-80, most provisions effective July 1, 2023).

Housing

Fair Share Housing Allocation Methodology

A new law requires the OPM secretary, in consultation with the Department of Housing (DOH) and Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) commissioners, to establish a methodology for determining each municipality's fair share allocation of affordable housing units by:

1. determining the need for affordable housing units in each of the state's planning regions, and
2. fairly allocating this need to each region's municipalities considering the duty of the state and municipalities to affirmatively further fair housing under the state Zoning Enabling Act and the federal Fair Housing Act.

The OPM secretary must establish the methodology by December 1, 2024, and in doing so, may consult with experts, advocates, statewide organizations representing municipalities, and organizations with expertise in affordable housing, fair housing, and planning and zoning. The methodology must meet certain requirements, such as generally relying on data from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy data set, or a similar source chosen by the OPM secretary.

The OPM secretary must submit the fair share allocation methodology developed under the act to (1) the Housing and Planning and Development committees and (2) each chamber of the General Assembly for approval ([PA 23-207](#), § 18, effective July 1, 2023).

Housing Code Violation Forms

Under new legislation, agencies that enforce municipal health and safety standards or the local housing code (i.e., the board of health or other designated authorities) must create housing code violation complaint forms, in both English and Spanish, and make them available for tenants to use ([PA 23-207](#), § 14, effective October 1, 2023).

Housing Project Replacements

A new law modifies two of the four conditions that must be met for housing authorities to sell, lease, transfer, or destroy a housing project that will not be available for, or replaced by, low-or moderate-income rental housing.

Under prior law, one of these conditions required a finding by the housing commissioner that the housing authority developed a plan for these actions in consultation with municipal representatives and the project's residents. The new law allows the plan to include constructing deed-restricted units that are owner-occupied single-family or multifamily housing to replace existing units at a one-to-one ratio or higher.

A second condition under prior law required a finding by the commissioner that anyone displaced by the action would receive assistance under the Uniform Relocation Assistance Act and either be relocated to a comparable public or subsidized housing dwelling unit in the municipality or be given a tenant-based rental subsidy. The new law additionally allows her to find that a displaced person will be relocated to a deed-restricted housing unit within a single-family or multifamily residence in the same municipality ([PA 23-144](#), effective October 1, 2023).

Increased Fines for Housing Violations

Existing law allows municipalities to set penalties, of up to \$250, for violations of their regulations and ordinances adopted under their statutorily enumerated general powers. A new law additionally allows municipalities to prescribe civil penalties of up to \$2,000 against rental property owners for each violation of the municipality's rules on maintaining safe and sanitary housing. However, the law requires that municipalities enforce multiple violations discovered on the same date as one violation.

The act allows an owner who is assessed this penalty to appeal to the municipality's legislative body, or board of selectmen where the legislative body is a town meeting, on the grounds that the violation was proximately caused by a tenant's deliberate or reckless action ([PA 23-207](#), § 3, effective October 1, 2023).

Mobile Home Parks Purchased by Residents

New legislation expands the types of transactions for which a mobile manufactured home park owner must give the park's residents notice and an opportunity to purchase the park before completing the proposed transaction. It exempts park owners from state or municipal conveyance tax if they convey the park to its residents under the new legislation or existing law on purchases by residents (which, broadly, applies when the owner intends to discontinue using the property as a

mobile home park). The exemption applies if the (1) entity buying the park is owned by more than 50% of the park's residents or has been assigned purchase rights and (2) sale terms require the guaranteed maintenance of the property as a mobile manufactured home park. The buyer is liable for the municipal portion of the conveyance tax and 50% of the state portion unless the buyer is otherwise exempt from the conveyance tax.

The new legislation also allows resident associations to assign purchase rights to the municipality where the park is located or to a housing authority in that municipality, among other entities, to continue using the property as a mobile home park ([PA 23-125](#), effective October 1, 2023).

Municipal Affordable Housing Plans

New legislation expands the municipal affordable housing planning requirement by requiring plans submitted to OPM after October 1, 2023, to specify how the municipality will improve affordable housing unit accessibility for people with an intellectual disability or other developmental disabilities.

Existing law requires all municipalities to adopt an affordable housing plan and submit a copy to OPM by June 1, 2022, and then at least once every five years. The plan must detail how the municipality will increase its number of affordable housing developments, as defined under CGS § 8-30g ([PA 23-137](#), § 55, effective October 1, 2023).

Municipal Redevelopment Authority

The Municipal Redevelopment Authority (MRDA) is a quasi-public agency authorized to stimulate economic development and transit-oriented development. A new law also makes one of MRDA's purposes to provide financial support and technical assistance to municipalities to develop "housing growth zones." These are areas around a central business district or passenger transit station in which local zoning regulations facilitate substantial new housing development. The new law eliminates the provision in prior law creating mandatory member municipalities and limiting optional membership to larger municipalities. In doing so, the new law allows any municipality outside the Capital Region Development Authority's jurisdiction to work with MRDA.

The new law also appropriates \$600,000 in both FYs 24 and 25 from the General Fund to DECD for MRDA's expenses ([PA 23-204](#), §§ 1, 31 & 194-198, effective dates vary). Additionally, the legislature authorized \$60 million in bonding to capitalize MRDA ([PA 23-205](#), § 92, effective July 1, 2023).

Municipal Reports on Housing Stock Changes

A new law requires every municipality to annually report to DECD on the number of (1) new dwellings permitted, including whether they are in single family, two-to-four family, or larger multifamily properties, and (2) dwelling units demolished. The first report, covering 2018-2022, is due December 31, 2023, with annual reports subsequently due by each March 31, beginning in 2024. Municipalities that do not comply are deemed ineligible for discretionary state funding that DECD administers ([PA 23-204](#), § 199, effective October 1, 2023).

Payment Standards for Rental Assistance and Common Rental Application for Housing Authorities

This session, the General Assembly enacted legislation requiring any housing authority that administers a tenant-based rental assistance program to publicly post a payment standard (or similar maximum monthly assistance payment) within 30 days after setting or updating it. The act requires a housing authority to post the payment standard in a prominent and publicly available location on its website or the website of the municipality in which it is located. The posting must include (1) a disclaimer that the maximum payment standard may not be applied in full to the actual rental rate the applicant paid in certain circumstances and (2) any rules or regulations the authority has adopted on rental assistance programs.

Additionally, the act requires the housing commissioner, in consultation with the state's housing authorities, to develop a common rental application that may be used by the housing authorities ([PA 23-207](#), §§ 40 & 41, effective October 1, 2023).

Tenement Rent Receivership Proceedings

Existing law allows courts to establish a rent receivership after finding that certain conditions affecting health or safety exist in a tenement (i.e., a building with at least three rental units). If established, the rent receiver uses the property's rental income to pay for correcting the cited conditions or reimburse the municipality for correcting them. Under a new law, when a municipal authority (as opposed to the tenants) requests a rent receivership, mortgagees and lienholders do not need to participate in proceedings to determine whether a receiver should be appointed; only property owners must respond to the municipality's request ([PA 23-33](#), § 9, effective October 1, 2023).

Workforce Housing Development Incentives

A new law establishes various state and local financial incentives for individuals and businesses investing in and developing rental units set aside for designated workforce populations under certain programs. Among other things, the new law does the following:

1. establishes a new tax credit against the personal income and corporation business taxes, administered by DOH, for individuals or entities making cash contributions to eligible developers constructing or rehabilitating eligible “workforce housing opportunity development projects” in federally designated opportunity zones;
2. requires municipal tax assessors to assess workforce housing opportunity development projects using the capitalization of net income method based on actual rent received for property tax assessment purposes;
3. exempts certain categories of workforce housing projects from building permit application fees; and
4. allows municipalities to provide up to a seven-year, 70% property tax exemption for workforce housing development projects, offset by a 70% state grant in lieu of taxes ([PA 23-207](#), §§ 28-35, most provisions effective June 1, 2024).

Land Use and Planning

Community Residences

This session, the legislature made several changes in laws governing where certain community and child-care residential facilities (i.e., certain group homes for adults or children, respectively, who have disabilities) may be located. Among other things, these changes:

1. increase the size, from those housing six people to those housing eight people, of these residences (and certain hospice residences) that are protected from zoning regulations, treating them differently than single family homes, and
2. exempt certain community and child-care residences from prohibitions on being located within 1,000 feet from one another ([PA 23-137](#), §§ 65-68, effective October 1, 2023, as amended by [PA 23-204](#), § 172, effective upon passage).

Dealer Certificates of Approval

A new law transfers authority to issue motor vehicle dealer and repairer certificates of approval from the municipality’s zoning board of appeals (or if the municipality does not have one, the entity designated by local law) to its zoning enforcement official. (These certificates indicate that the municipality has determined the location is suitable and has also been approved by the local building official and fire marshal.) Under the new law, the zoning enforcement official must

determine whether the proposed location and use complies with the municipality's zoning regulations. Prior law did not specify criteria to consider when reviewing these applications ([PA 23-40](#), § 30, effective July 1, 2023).

Environmental Justice Review

The state's environmental justice law generally requires applicants seeking to build, expand, or site certain facilities in environmental justice communities to engage in a public participation process. A new law makes changes in this law by, among other things:

1. exempting minor modifications of an existing permit for a covered facility from the law's requirements;
2. requiring certain applicants to file an assessment of environmental or public health stressors after DEEP adopts associated regulations;
3. expanding the notice that must be given about an upcoming informal public meeting to include online posts and direct mail notice to certain households;
4. requiring the chief elected official or town manager, when negotiating a community environmental benefit agreement to mitigate a facility's impacts, to select a resident of the potentially affected environmental justice community to participate in the negotiations; and
5. after the adoption of associated regulations, allowing DEEP or the Siting Council, as applicable, to deny or place reasonable conditions on a permit for a new facility if it finds that approving it would yield adverse cumulative environmental or public health stressors that are greater than those experienced in other communities ([PA 23-202](#), effective October 1, 2023).

A provision in the annual bond act, however, establishes a process for electors or voters in municipalities of 10,000 or fewer persons to petition for a town referendum on a permit denial by the commissioner that is based on cumulative environmental or public health stressors. Under this new law, an affirmative vote overrides the commissioner's denial and deems the permit approved ([PA 23-205](#), § 191, effective October 1, 2024).

Group and Family Child Care Homes

This session, the General Assembly enacted legislation that makes changes in laws on family and group child care homes. Among other things, the act prohibits zoning regulations from requiring special permits or exceptions for operating these child care homes. It also prohibits zoning regulations from treating licensed group child care homes located in a residence differently than single- or multi-family dwellings.

Starting by December 1, 2023, the new law requires each municipality's chief executive officer to annually submit to OPM a sworn statement (1) confirming that the municipality's zoning ordinances comply with the zoning requirements discussed above or (2) identifying the specific timeframe within which the municipality will bring its zoning ordinances into compliance.

The act also prohibits municipalities from imposing operational conditions (other than those the Office of Early Childhood requires) on group child care homes located in a residence that comply with all codes and ordinances applicable to single- and multi-family dwellings ([PA 23-142](#), effective October 1, 2023).

OPM Office of Responsible Growth

A new law statutorily establishes the Office of Responsible Growth within OPM's Intergovernmental Policy Division and makes it the successor agency to the office of the same name established by executive order in 2006. Among other things, the act makes the office responsible for the following:

1. collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information to help the ongoing development of responsible growth goals for the governor, Continuing Committee on State Planning and Development, state and regional agencies, local governments, and the public;
2. facilitating coordination between the state, planning regions, and municipalities, on development and conservation, by serving as a state liaison to regional councils of government; and
3. administering certain grant programs (e.g., incentive grant programs for responsible growth and transit-oriented development) ([PA 23-207](#), § 17, effective October 1, 2023).

Planning Commission Alternates

A new law allows zoning commission or Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) members to serve as alternates on a municipality's planning commission, so long as they recuse themselves from any appeal before the ZBA that they heard as an alternate on the planning commission ([PA 23-173](#), § 2, effective October 1, 2023).

Public Notice of Application to DEEP

A new law revises the public notice requirements for applications for certain DEEP-issued permits and licenses for regulated activities (e.g., constructing dams, constructing solid waste facilities, dredging, stream channel encroachment). By law, an applicant must publish notice of an application in a local newspaper. The new law requires the applicant to also publish notice on the website where the affected municipality posts local land use decisions and on DEEP's website. It

also requires the DEEP commissioner to publish her tentative determination on an application on these same municipal and DEEP websites ([PA 23-196](#), §§ 8 & 9, effective upon passage).

Liability

Liability Protection for Acting Based on Erased Criminal Records

Existing law prohibits discrimination in various contexts based on someone's erased criminal history record information. A new law establishes liability protections for the state, any municipality, or anyone else who acted based on the criminal history record information required to be erased, or deemed erased by operation of law, despite the law's anti-discrimination provisions.

This applies if the (1) action was taken in good faith reliance on the information and (2) information has not yet been marked as erased by the required automated system, or, in the case of a municipality or other person, the erasure marking has not been communicated to them. Starting in 2024, the liability protection applies only to actions taken during the 30-day window after the records should have been marked as erased ([PA 23-134](#), § 6, effective upon passage).

Negligent Use of Municipal Motor Vehicles

A new law eliminates the governmental immunity defense in a civil action for damages to a person or property caused by the negligent operation of a motor vehicle owned by a political subdivision (e.g., municipality) ([PA 23-83](#), effective upon passage).

Natural Resources

Eel Grass Restoration Working Group

A new law requires the Environment Committee's co-chairpersons and ranking members to convene a working group to develop strategies for restoring eel grass along the state's shoreline. The group must include members of shoreline conservation commissions and municipal shellfish commissions, among others. It must report to the Environment Committee by February 1, 2024 ([SA 23-7](#), effective upon passage).

Environmental Justice Community Tree Canopy Goal

A new law makes it a state goal to increase, by January 1, 2040, the total percentage of environmental justice communities that are covered by tree canopy by 5% of the total area of those communities that have a current tree canopy cover of less than 40%. It does so to ensure state residents equitably enjoy open space and tree cover benefits ([PA 23-206](#), § 2, effective October 1, 2023).

Fishing Regulation Public Hearing Notice

A new law requires the DEEP commissioner to post notice of a public hearing on proposed fishing regulations on DEEP's website and the state's eRegulations system, as well as in newspapers as under existing law. She must also give the notice to affected municipalities so they may post it on their websites ([PA 23-196](#), §§ 2 & 3, effective upon passage).

Parks and Recreation

Batterson Park Feasibility Study

Under a new law, the DEEP commissioner must study the feasibility of, and recommend options for, public recreational access to Batterson Park property in New Britain and Farmington. In doing this, she must consult with Hartford and other interested municipalities. The study must evaluate various park redevelopment options, including public and public-private partnerships. The commissioner must (1) hold at least one meeting to take public comments on the park's redevelopment in each affected municipality (i.e., Hartford, New Britain, and Farmington) and (2) report findings to the Environment Committee by January 15, 2024 ([PA 23-204](#), § 140, effective upon passage).

Bazaars and Raffles

Currently, any town in which a raffle is being conducted must have adopted the Bazaar and Raffles Act. Beginning October 1, 2023, a new law deems every town, city, and borough to have adopted the Act and instead provides an opt-out process. The new law also makes other minor changes, including eliminating a prohibition against awarding transferrable prizes ([PA 23-98](#), §§ 20-25, effective July 1, 2023).

Splash Pad and Spray Park Warning Signs

Under a new law, owners or operators of splash pads and spray parks where water is recirculated must post a sign stating that the water is recirculated and warning of the potential health risk of ingesting it. They must post the sign by January 1, 2024, and in a conspicuous place at or near the entrance ([PA 23-97](#), § 21, effective July 1, 2023).

Squantz Pond Capacity Limit

Under a new law, the DEEP commissioner must develop and publicly post the capacity limit of Squantz Pond State Park (in New Fairfield) by January 31, 2024. The new law also (1) requires the commissioner to coordinate with municipal and state law enforcement to implement traffic control

efforts to minimize public safety concerns on local and state roads and (2) allows her to close the park to new entrants when the capacity limit is reached ([PA 23-43](#), effective upon passage).

Title IX Assessment Working Group

A new law creates a 12-member working group to study the possibility of assessing all municipal recreation areas and facilities used for organized sports, and any sports facilities maintained by a public school, to determine if they comply with Title IX of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1972 (a federal law aimed at ensuring male and female students and employees in educational settings are treated equally and fairly). The group must submit its findings and recommendations to the Planning and Development and Education committees by January 1, 2024 ([SA 23-18](#), effective upon passage).

Public Health

Certified Food Inspectors

A new law eliminates the requirement that certified food inspector applicants be employed by a local health department before receiving their certification, which allows them to complete certification requirements before working as a food inspector.

The act also prohibits a certified food inspector, the inspector's immediate family, or a business the inspector associates with from (1) having a financial or ownership interest in a food establishment in their jurisdiction; (2) engaging in any business, employment, or management of such a food establishment; or (3) owning the property where the food establishment is located ([PA 23-31](#), § 26, effective January 1, 2024).

Drug Use Harm Reduction Centers

A new law requires DMHAS, by July 1, 2027, to create a pilot program with harm reduction centers where people with substance use disorder can access counseling, receive and use fentanyl or xylazine test strips, and receive various other services. These centers must be established in three municipalities the DMHAS commissioner chooses, subject to their chief elected officials' approval. The centers must employ licensed providers with experience treating people with substance use disorders ([PA 23-97](#), §§ 3 & 4, effective upon passage).

Local Food Protection Program Audits

A new law authorizes the Department of Public Health (DPH) commissioner to conduct audits of local health department food protection programs that may include (1) interviews with local health department staff and (2) joint inspections of local food establishments with local health department

staff. After completing an audit, the commissioner must give the local health director a report detailing the audit's findings and any recommended or necessary corrective actions the director must take ([PA 23-31](#), § 27, effective upon passage).

Local Health Department Reporting System for Sodium Chloride Damage

This session, the legislature extended by one year, from January 1, 2023, to January 1, 2024, the deadline for local health departments to establish an electronic reporting system for owners of homes or wells directly damaged by sodium chloride run-off to report the damage to the local health department. It also correspondingly extended, from January 1, 2024, to January 1, 2025, the deadline for these health departments to start annually submitting the reports recorded during the prior year to OPM.

Additionally, the act makes the certain information related to the reporting system confidential, such as the testing results originating due to a sodium chloride run-off report provided to DPH, OPM, or local health departments and information obtained from DPH or local health department investigations on the results ([PA 23-31](#), § 19, effective upon passage).

Opioid Antagonist Bulk Purchase Fund and EMS Provision of Opioid Antagonist Kits

A new law creates an Opioid Antagonist Bulk Purchase Fund as a separate, nonlapsing General Fund account. Starting by January 1, 2024, DMHAS, in collaboration with DPH, must use the account's funds to provide opioid antagonists (medications that block the effects of opioids) to municipalities, emergency medical services (EMS) organizations, and other eligible entities. Relatedly, it also requires EMS personnel to give kits with opioid antagonists and a related one-page fact sheet to certain patients (such as those showing symptoms of opioid use disorder) or their family members, caregivers, or friends ([PA 23-97](#), § 5, effective October 1, 2023).

Reducing Duplicative Health Inspections

A new law requires the DPH commissioner to study the requirements for each inspection DPH must conduct under state law or regulation to determine whether the inspection is duplicative of any that municipal or district health departments must conduct. The commissioner must report to the Public Health Committee by January 1, 2024, on the study and any recommendations for reducing duplicative inspections ([SA 23-12](#), effective upon passage).

Public Safety & First Responders

Address Verification for Registered Sex Offenders

Under a new law, local police departments (or the state police troop in whose jurisdiction a registered sex offender resides) must verify a registrant's residential address in person every 90 days if he or she resides at an address where there is no mail delivery ([PA 23-193](#), effective October 1, 2023).

Automated Traffic Enforcement

In response to a recent rise in traffic deaths, the legislature passed a law allowing municipalities to use speed and red light cameras if they (1) adopt an ordinance meeting the law's requirements and (2) get a speed and red light camera plan approved by the Department of Transportation (DOT) every three years. DOT must develop speed and red light camera plan guidelines and evaluation criteria that ensure cameras are installed only where they are likely to improve traffic safety and that their distribution is equitable.

Under the new law, municipalities must (1) hold a public hearing on camera plans and get legislative body approval before submitting to DOT for approval and (2) notify the public about a camera's location through public awareness campaigns, signage, and mobile navigation apps. Municipalities may charge a fine of up to \$50 for a first violation and \$75 for subsequent violations, and any revenue received must be used for transportation infrastructure and mobility improvements or to pay the cameras' operating costs. The new law also addresses ticket issuance and processing, data privacy, and data reporting, among other provisions ([PA 23-116](#), §§ 10-14 & 16-18, most provisions effective October 1, 2023).

Combatting Illegal Roadway Traffic Activity

A new law requires the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) commissioner to establish a regional task force to combat illegal traffic activities in the Greater Hartford area committed by organized groups riding motor vehicles, motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, and other vehicles. This Greater Hartford Regional Law Enforcement Task Force to Combat Illegal Roadway Traffic Activity comprises state and local law enforcement officers in the Greater Hartford area. It may ask for and receive from any federal, state, or local agency cooperation and help, including temporarily assigning any necessary personnel. The DESPP commissioner may also, within available appropriations, appoint a commanding officer and other personnel that he finds necessary ([PA 23-112](#), effective July 1, 2023).

Emergency Services Awareness Programs

Under a new law, the Department of Developmental Services, DESPP, and the Department of Children and Families must, by December 31, 2023, jointly develop guidelines and best practices for municipalities to create and implement emergency services awareness programs for children and adults with an autism spectrum disorder, cognitive impairments, nonverbal learning disorders, and intellectual and other developmental disabilities.

The programs must at least give these children and adults an opportunity to observe and interact with (1) uniformed emergency services personnel, (2) their vehicles and their associated flashing lights and sirens, and (3) mock traffic stops. They must be held in a setting suited to the children's and adults' developmental and sensory needs ([PA 23-137](#), § 9, effective upon passage).

EMS Data Collection and Reporting

A new law requires EMS organizations, in their quarterly data reporting, to include the reasons for 9-1-1 calls. It also adds data on any EMS personnel shortages in the state to an existing report that DPH must provide annually to the EMS Advisory Board. And starting by June 1, 2024, it requires the commissioner to annually submit the report to the Public Health Committee ([PA 23-97](#), § 36, effective October 1, 2023).

Local Emergency Operations Plans

By law, every town must have a current emergency operations plan approved by the DESPP commissioner every two years to be eligible for certain state or federal emergency management benefits. The plan must be approved by the local emergency management director and chief executive before it is submitted to the commissioner. Under a new law, plans submitted on or after January 1, 2025, must include a domestic terrorism prevention strategy. The strategy must be described in a domestic terrorist prevention plan annex, based on standards provided by DESPP's Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security ([PA 23-24](#), effective October 1, 2023).

Local Voluntary Public Safety Registration System for Children With IDD

A new law creates a voluntary public safety registration system that municipal police departments may implement for parents and guardians of children with intellectual or developmental disability (IDD), including autism spectrum disorder, cognitive impairments, and nonverbal learning disorders. It requires DESPP, within available appropriations, to develop a form that municipal police departments may distribute to these parents and guardians to collect specified information that can help emergency services personnel (i.e., police, firefighting, medical, ambulance, and others) interact with the children. Participating municipal police departments must record the information

in a database that police officers and emergency dispatchers can access in specified situations ([PA 23-137](#), §§ 7 & 8, as amended by [PA 23-204](#), § 170, effective upon passage).

The FY 24-25 bond act authorizes \$800,000 in state general obligation bonds for this system ([PA 23-205](#), § 95, effective July 1, 2023).

Police Assistance Agreements and Requests for Aid

A new law sets specific terms that municipal police assistance agreements entered into, renewed, or amended on and after July 1, 2023, must include. Specifically, they must (1) allow each municipality's police chief, or the chief's designee, to request and provide police assistance and (2) require those who do so to inform their municipality's CEO about the actions taken. The act also makes several changes to the process for requesting aid absent an agreement, including authorizing the municipality's police chief to make the request instead of its CEO, narrowing the circumstances when a request may be made and for how long assistance may be provided, and generally transferring responsibility for costs incurred from the requesting municipality to the one supplying the assistance ([PA 23-81](#), effective July 1, 2023).

Seat Belt Safety in Municipal Police Vehicles

A new law requires the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST), by December 31, 2023, to develop a model policy on required seat belt use in municipal police vehicles, including procedures to ensure that anyone being transported in a municipal police vehicle is secured by one. The new law also (1) requires that each municipal law enforcement unit, by April 1, 2024, adopt a written policy that meets or exceeds the standards in POST's model policy and (2) establishes procedures to discipline (including certification revocation) officers who violate the policy and undermine public confidence in the law enforcement unit ([PA 23-87](#), effective July 1, 2023).

Sensory Kits for Emergency Services Personnel

A new law requires the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to develop and acquire sensory kits for DESPP to distribute to emergency services personnel who interact with children and adults with autism spectrum disorder, cognitive impairments, or nonverbal learning disorders. The kits must (1) help these children and adults manage emotions and anxiety while interacting with emergency services personnel and during emergencies to which they respond and (2) include noise-canceling headphones, dark tinted glasses, and anxiety-reducing tactile objects or toys.

Municipalities may apply to DESPP for the kits by September 1, 2025, and DESPP must choose up to 75 municipalities to receive the kits, based on specified criteria. DESPP must determine the number of kits to distribute to each selected municipality based on a formula it sets, which must

consider the municipality's population and demonstrated need for the kits ([PA 23-137](#), § 10, effective upon passage).

Task Force on Police Recruitment and Retention

A new nine-member task force will study police recruitment and retention in Connecticut and make recommendations to the Public Safety and Security Committee by January 1, 2024. The task force is composed the DESPP commissioner, or his designee, and eight appointees, one appointed by each of the top six legislative leaders and two appointed by the governor ([PA 23-69](#), § 2, effective upon passage).

Task Force on Shortage of Firefighters and EMS Personnel

A new 13-member task force is charged with studying the shortage of firefighters and EMS personnel in Connecticut and making recommendations to address it. The task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Public Safety and Security Committee by January 1, 2024 ([SA 23-1](#), effective upon passage).

Records Management and Access

Fetal Death Certificates

By law, a fetal death certificate must be completed for each fetal death that occurs after at least 20 weeks of pregnancy (i.e., stillbirth). The certificate must be signed by specified health professionals and filed with the vital records registrar in the municipality where the death occurred. A new law exempts a father or mother from the filing requirement when the birth occurs outside of an institution (e.g., a home birth) and a physician or midwife does not attend ([PA 23-31](#), § 21, effective October 1, 2023).

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Violations

New legislation increases, from \$1,000 to \$5,000, the maximum civil penalty that the Freedom of Information Commission (FOIC) may impose against a records custodian or official for denying, without reasonable grounds, a right conferred by the FOIA (e.g., a request to inspect or copy a public record).

Additionally, under the legislation, if the commission finds that a public agency is engaging in (1) a practice or pattern of conduct that constitutes an obstruction of any right conferred by FOIA or (2) reckless, willful, or wanton misconduct in delaying or denying responses to public records requests, then it may (1) impose a civil penalty of \$20 to \$5,000 against a custodian or other official of the public agency and (2) order other relief that it determines is appropriate to correct the obstruction

or misconduct and deter the agency from violating FOIA. FOIC may also apply to New Britain Superior Court for an order requiring the public agency to comply with an order it issued related to these findings ([PA 23-200](#), effective October 1, 2023).

Task Force on Online Land Records and Maps

A new law establishes a task force to study the processes, associated costs, and benefits of creating and maintaining a publicly accessible online database for recording, indexing, and searching municipal land records and maps. The task force must submit a report to the legislature by February 1, 2024 ([SA 23-9](#), effective upon passage).

Taxes

Abatement for New Grocery Stores in Food Deserts

New legislation authorizes municipalities to adopt an ordinance to partially or fully abate property taxes on new grocery stores established in food deserts for the assessment years beginning on October 1, 2023, and October 1, 2024. Any grocery store larger than 20,000 square feet must enter into a labor peace agreement with a bona fide labor organization to qualify for the abatement. The new law allows the state to provide grants to municipalities for taxes that they abate for qualifying grocery stores in the covered assessment years ([PA 23-204](#), §§ 156-158, effective October 1, 2023).

Conservation Easements Property Tax Exemption

A new law allows municipalities to adopt an ordinance establishing a program to abate property taxes for qualifying portions of a taxpayer's land that are subject to a conservation restriction preserving its use as a recreational trail. To qualify, the portion of land must meet certain criteria (e.g., meet the Connecticut Greenways Council's criteria for designation as a greenway, be subject to a permanent conservation restriction, and not exceed 100 feet at its widest point).

The law relatedly establishes an application and municipal approval process for these abatements. Under the new law, an abatement continues with the land (even if sold or transferred) until the municipality's legislative body, or board of selectmen if the legislative body is a town meeting, votes to end it ([PA 23-207](#), § 1, effective October 1, 2023, and applicable to assessment years beginning on or after that date).

Electronic Payment of Municipal Taxes

Municipalities could already allow taxpayers to pay their tax bills using credit cards. This session, the legislature expanded the allowable payment methods to include debit cards, charge cards, and

electronic payment services (e.g., PayPal) and applied the same conditions that apply to credit cards to their use (e.g., limiting the fee the municipalities may impose) ([PA 23-132](#), effective October 1, 2023).

Exemption Deadline Waivers

A new law allows taxpayers in nine municipalities (Berlin, Bloomfield, East Hampton, Meriden, Middletown, Thomaston, Thompson, West Hartford, and West Haven) to claim a property tax exemption for specified property and grand lists, even though they missed the filing deadline ([PA 23-205](#), §§ 140-147 & 157, effective July 1, 2023).

Hartford Tax Agreements

Existing law allows Hartford to negotiate and fix assessments on improvements for retail, commercial, and residential uses that are either (1) located within the Adriaen's Landing site, including on-site related private developments, or (2) qualifying projects (i.e., "capital city projects"). A new law extends the maximum term of these fixed assessments from 15 to 20 years and eliminates the requirement for a qualifying project to have received at least \$5 million in funding from the Capital Region Development Authority in order to qualify for the fixed assessment ([PA 23-205](#), § 152, effective upon passage).

Motor Vehicle Property Tax Procedural Changes Delayed

This session, the legislature delayed by one year provisions in a 2022 law ([PA 22-118](#), §§ 497-509) that made various changes to motor vehicle taxation and assessment procedures, which were set to go into effect for assessment years beginning on and after October 1, 2023. Among other things, these delayed provisions:

1. exempt from property tax snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, and utility trailers used exclusively for personal purposes;
2. require municipalities to value motor vehicles based on their manufacturer's suggested retail price (MSRP) and a 20-year depreciation schedule, rather than the schedule of values annually recommended by OPM;
3. modify the timeline for supplemental property taxes due on motor vehicles registered after each assessment year starts; and
4. require taxpayers to include on personal property declarations motor vehicles that are included in a schedule of motor vehicle plate classes established by OPM ([PA 23-204](#), §§ 209-219, effective July 1, 2023, and applicable to assessment years starting on or after October 1, 2024).

Rental Property Income and Expense Statements

By law, municipal assessors may require rental property owners to file annual income and operating expense statements to assist in their property valuations. This session, the legislature passed a law that (1) extends, from May 1 to June 1, the deadline for taxpayers to request a filing extension; (2) allows filings and extension requests that are postmarked on or by the due date to qualify as timely even if the municipality receives them after the due date; and (3) for late filings, sets time limits for municipalities to mail or deliver new bills incorporating the penalty and for when bill payments become due ([PA 23-152](#), effective July 1, 2023).

Task Force to Review Boards of Assessment Appeals Proceedings

A new seven-member task force will review boards of assessment appeals proceedings and report its findings and recommendations to the legislature by January 1, 2024. The review must at least (1) examine the current proceedings to identify problems or inefficiencies for people, companies, and municipalities; (2) recommend statutory changes to improve or lessen these problems or inefficiencies; and (3) examine the feasibility of implementing a professional, independent appeals system for these proceedings ([PA 23-204](#), § 386, effective upon passage).

Task Force to Study Repeal of the Motor Vehicle Property Tax

This session, the legislature created a task force to study the feasibility of repealing the motor vehicle property tax and the potential impact on municipal budgets. The task force must also analyze possible sources of replacement revenue for municipalities, including an annual 8% tax on direct net premiums received by insurance companies for private passenger nonfleet auto insurance policies and on homeowner insurance policies for property in the state. The task force must submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the legislature by February 1, 2024 ([SA 23-24](#), effective upon passage).

Working Group on the Taxation of Real and Personal Property on Tribal Land

The legislature created a new working group to examine the taxation of reservation land held in trust for federally recognized Indian tribes in Connecticut and tangible personal property located there. The working group, which must include at least one representative from each municipality that is impacted by a change to the property's taxation, must report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly by January 1, 2024 ([PA 23-204](#), § 359, effective upon passage).

Training and Certification

Local Traffic Authority Training

Starting by January 1, 2024, a new law requires local traffic authorities (LTA), or their appointed representatives, to annually complete one LTA training at UConn's Connecticut Training and Technical Assistance Center. UConn must offer this training at least three times per year. The training must cover the authorities' powers and responsibilities, traffic control device installation, and applicable statutes and Office of the State Traffic Administration regulations ([PA 23-135](#), § 5, effective upon passage).

Training for Certain Land Use Officials

An existing law requires each member of a local planning commission, zoning commission, planning and zoning commission, or ZBA to complete at least four hours of training every other year. A new law exempts from this requirement (1) land use enforcement officers and (2) Connecticut-licensed attorneys who served at least four years on one of these boards or commissions. The new law also eliminates the requirement that members complete training biennially, instead requiring them to complete the training once every four years or once per term, if their term is longer than four years ([PA 23-173](#), § 3, effective October 1, 2023).

Zoning Enforcement Officer Certification

Existing law has a certification requirement for certain zoning enforcement officers (ZEOs). A new law clarifies this requirement and applies it to ZEOs newly appointed beginning January 1, 2024. Additionally, beginning January 1, 2023, existing law requires ZEOs to obtain certification, without specifying a timeframe for doing so. The new law clarifies that ZEOs must become certified "as soon as practicable" after appointment ([PA 23-173](#), § 1, effective October 1, 2023).

Utilities and Services

Assistance to the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC)

A new law requires DEEP to use available funding, including certain Clean Water Act funds, to operate a program that gives financial assistance to MDC for repairs and improvements to Hartford's sewerage systems, especially projects that will protect residential dwellings from property damage ([PA 23-204](#), § 141, effective upon passage).

Municipal Solid Waste Management

Provisions in the solid waste management omnibus act do the following on municipal waste matters:

1. allow the DEEP commissioner to (a) issue a request for proposals from solid waste materials management services providers on behalf of municipalities, municipal authorities, or regional solid waste authorities and (b) enter into an agreement, subject to the municipalities' or authorities' consent, for the management of solid waste;
2. allow municipalities, through an ordinance or other enforceable legal instrument, to identify new recyclable solid wastes, including food scraps and yard waste, for diversion to recycling facilities; and
3. allow municipal legislative bodies to designate disposal areas for residential food scraps and food processing residues ([PA 23-170](#), §§ 2-4, most provisions effective upon passage).

Public Water Supply Sources

By law, Department of Public Health has jurisdiction over the purity and adequacy of all public water supply sources used by municipalities, public institutions, or water companies. Starting July 1, 2024, a new law extends the department's jurisdiction to include water supply sources over which these entities hold the right for future or emergency use ([PA 23-31](#), § 17, effective upon passage).

Report to DEEP on MDC's Projects

A new law requires Hartford and MDC to jointly submit a report by January 1, 2024, to DEEP and the Environment and Planning and Development committees on (1) the status of any planned or underway long-term projects in Hartford that are intended to improve the city's sewerage or stormwater infrastructure and (2) their plan to mitigate or prevent future flooding issues, including by investing in green infrastructure ([PA 23-204](#), § 145, effective upon passage).

Miscellaneous

Accessible Parking Advisory Council

The legislature created an Accessible Parking Advisory Council within the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to, among other things, (1) develop a strategy to deter, detect, and prevent fraud and misuse related to placard issuance and (2) make recommendations on streetscape issues that interfere with the ability of a person with disabilities or blindness to access accessible parking. The council consists of the DMV and aging and disability commissioners; two DMV commissioner-appointed licensed physicians, physician assistants, or advanced practice registered nurses who certify placard applications in the course of their employment; a representative of a disability advocacy organization, a municipal planner, two accessible parking users or advocates, and a municipal police officer. The council must report to the legislature annually by January 1, starting in 2025 ([PA 23-40](#), § 36, effective upon passage).

Aircraft Registration

By law, aircraft owners must annually register their aircraft with the municipality in which it is based or primarily used. The act generally eliminates the role of the Connecticut Airport Authority (CAA) in administering the registration program, specifically repealing requirements that CAA (1) establish the aircraft registration program and (2) adopt any necessary rules and procedures for implementing it. It retains requirements that CAA prepare and distribute registration decals and forms to municipalities, but it eliminates the specific information the forms must contain. It also makes changes related to information that must be reported by municipalities to CAA and by aircraft owners and airport to municipalities ([PA 23-135](#), §§ 16-19 & 22, effective July 1, 2023).

Certificate of Need Notifications

Generally, existing law requires certain health care facilities to apply for and receive a certificate of need (CON) from the Office of Health Strategy when proposing to (1) establish a new facility or provide new services, (2) change ownership, (3) purchase or acquire certain equipment, or (4) terminate certain services. Among other related changes, a new law requires CON applicants to request that notice of their impending application be published (1) in at least two sites in the affected community that are commonly accessed by the public, such as a town hall or library, and (2) on any existing website of the municipality or local health department. It similarly requires applicants to request this publication for the public hearing notice, when applicable ([PA 23-171](#), § 12, effective October 1, 2023).

Charter Revisions

A new law limits the changes municipalities may make to their charters. It prohibits them from modifying any of the following through a charter amendment:

1. how petitions challenging a planning or zoning commission (or combined commission) decision may be filed with the local legislative body or zoning board of appeals, including (a) how many signatures are required, (b) how they are collected, and (c) residency requirements;
2. regulations concerning the planning commission or zoning commission (or combined commission);
3. certain eminent domain-related procedural requirements; or
4. certain procedural requirements to dispose of municipal property.

The new law prohibits these charter changes even if the charter or a special act or ordinance states otherwise ([PA 23-205](#), § 158, effective upon passage).

Metropolitan Planning Organization Consolidation

Under a new law, the Connecticut Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations must study and make recommendations on consolidating metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to increase consistency and efficiency in transportation planning. The study is due to the governor and Transportation Committee by January 1, 2024, and it must, among other things, (1) recommend a minimum population to be represented by an MPO; (2) recommend MPOs that can be consolidated or reconfigured; and (3) identify benefits the state and municipalities may receive from consolidating MPOs and barriers they may encounter while planning and implementing MPO consolidation ([SA 23-13](#), effective upon passage).

Probate Court Facility Technology

By law, the towns comprising each probate district must provide court facilities that meet minimum standards specified by statute. A new law updates the required technology by specifically requiring (1) basic phone service that includes all necessary calls, not just local calls, and (2) network wiring, electrical wiring, and internet service. It also specifies that the computer equipment maintenance, phone line, wiring, and internet service must be appropriate to conduct the court's business as the probate court administrator determines ([PA 23-189](#), § 1, effective October 1, 2023).

Public Hearings for Municipal Audits

A new law requires that local legislative bodies (or boards of selectmen where the legislative body is a town meeting) hold public hearings to discuss annual municipal financial audits that the Office of Policy and Management secretary determines (1) were not prepared in compliance with state law or (2) show evidence of unsound or irregular financial practices or lack of internal controls. During the hearing, the body must discuss the audit's findings and potential causes of the discrepancies identified. Additionally, the law requires the body to consider what was discussed at the meeting when preparing the corrective action plan in response to the audit ([PA 23-197](#), § 2, effective October 1, 2023).

Task Force on Unclaimed or Abandoned Real Property

A new law creates a task force to study the possible financial and legal consequences incurred by municipalities due to unclaimed or abandoned real property. The group must look at these properties' impact on property tax revenues and adjacent property values, and the potential best practices or strategies to reduce any negative impacts (e.g., programs to help municipalities dispose of these properties or incentivize owners to maintain and occupy their properties). The task force must submit a report to the legislature by January 1, 2024 ([SA 23-10](#), effective upon passage).

Veterans' Services Representatives

By law, municipalities must have a veterans' representative program and designate an entity to carry out the program's duties (e.g., assisting veterans and their dependents get services and benefits). This session, the General Assembly made various changes to the laws on these programs, such as (1) allowing municipalities to carry out program-related duties jointly and (2) requiring all designated representatives to complete a training offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Aid and Advocacy (prior law only required this of volunteers and town employees serving as representatives) ([PA 23-34](#), effective October 1, 2023).

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