



MAJOR BILLS - LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

April 15, 2024

BUDGET & BOND PACKAGE

HB-5047 – STEAP Grants - Includes provisions increasing the grant amount under the Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) from \$500,000 to \$1 million. *Status: Approved by the Appropriations Committee, sent to the House. (COST supports)*

SB-10 – Bond Package – Adjusts the bond package approved last year by authorizing 1) \$10 million to waste diversion programs, possibly pilot municipal food scrap diversion and other recycling programs; 2) An additional \$15 million for the Local Capital Improvement Program (LoCIP); 3) \$10 million for climate resiliency, and 4) \$15 million for microgrid & resilience grant and loan program. *Status: Approved by the Finance Committee, sent to the Senate. (COST supports)*

SB-375 – Pequot/Mohegan Grant – Increases funding for the grant program to provide \$139.38 million in additional resources to municipalities. Currently, the program is funded at \$51.5 million and grants to municipalities must be prorated. *Status: Approved by the Appropriations Committee, sent to the Senate. (COST supports)*

EDUCATION

Education Funding - Governor’s proposed budget redirects the additional funding approved last year for K-12 “education financing reform” in FY 25 by: 1) Redirecting \$5.7 million to adjust ECS funding to reflect changes in enrollment, student needs, and community wealth, 2) Reducing increased funding slated for magnet, charter, open choice, and Vo-ag and science schools, 3) Redirecting funding to support universal free school breakfast and reduced-price meal subsidy program, the Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP), and increasing funding for the CT Technical High School System, 4) Shifting funding to support childcare initiatives. *Status: Died in the Appropriations Committee.*

HB-5212 - Education Financing Reform – Restores education finance reform funding that would have been redirected under the Governor’s proposed budget. The bill also maintains the accelerated ECS phase-in and holds harmless municipalities harmless from any loss of ECS funding. *Status: Approved by the Education & Appropriations Committees, sent to the House. (COST supports)*

SB-5 - Special Education Excess Cost Funding – To address concerns that the amount budgeted for special education excess costs fell \$75 million short in reimbursing municipalities, SB-5 would make the Excess Cost grant an entitlement grant to ensure that districts receive adequate funding. *Status: Approved by the Education Committee, sent to the Senate. (COST supports)*



SB-381 - Teachers' Salaries – Sets a minimum salary level of \$60,000 for teachers and includes an escalator clause to increase salaries on an annual basis. Provides \$1000 bonuses for teachers employed during COVID. *Status: Amended by the Appropriations Committee to strip out the minimum salary levels, sent to the Senate. (COST opposed)*

HB-5047 – School Construction Cap – Includes provisions capping school construction grants to \$500 million and authorizing the state Department of Administrative Services to adopt regulations to set the maximum allowable reimbursable cost per square foot for school building projects costs. *Status: Provisions deleted from the bill. (COST opposed)*

HB-5348 - Paraeducators – Sets a minimum salary level of \$45,000 for paraeducators and includes an escalator clause to increase salaries on an annual basis. *Status: Died in the Appropriations Committee. (COST opposed)*

HB-5437 - Mandate Relief - (1) Creates an advisory council that will analyze the costs associated with new mandates regarding professional development and in-service training; (2) repeals duplicative education in-service training mandates (3) adds a 20 mile radius limitation to the mandate that school districts send organic food waste to an authorized source-separated organic material composting facility; (4) expands the reserve fund for regional school districts to include all educational expenditures (stripped from the bill); and (5) allows local boards of education to directly deposit any unexpended education funds into the unexpended education funds account at the end of the fiscal year (stripped from the bill). *Status: Amended by the Appropriations Committee, sent to the House. (COST opposed provisions regarding unexpended education funds, which were stripped from the bill)*

SB-287 - Indoor Air Quality - Allows the cost of performing the uniform inspection and evaluation of HVAC systems to be a reimbursable cost under the grant program; and provides boards of education flexibility when it comes to performing inspections and evaluations. *Status: Approved by the Education Committee, sent to the Senate. (COST supports)*

ENERGY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

HB-5232 – Solar PV Property Tax – Subjects solar PV systems to a Uniform Capacity Tax (UCT) of \$8,000/megawatt. The intent is to ensure that municipalities receive the same level of revenues under the UCT that they would otherwise be able to negotiate under a Tax Stabilization Agreement. Also requires municipalities to establish a simplified planning and zoning approval process for solar canopy project applications and to approve or deny such applications within six months. Under consideration: 1) Increasing \$8000/MW UCT, 2) Including an escalator clause, 3) Closing a Loophole that allows solar PV systems to be split up to avoid property taxation. *Status: Approved by the Energy & Technology Committee, sent to the House. (COST supports with revisions)*



SB-198 – Siting Council - Adds a municipal representative to the CT Siting Council to address concerns that the Council is not adequately addressing municipal concerns regarding the siting of facilities on wetlands, core forests, & other environmentally sensitive areas. *Status: Approved by the Environment Committee, sent to the Senate. (COST supports)*

HB-5507 – Siting Council - Requires electric companies to notify municipalities of any proposed electric transmission lines and includes other provisions to address municipal concerns. *Status: Approved by the Judiciary Committee, sent to the House. (COST supports)*

HB-5361 - Siting Council - Revises the CT Siting Council approval process for certain renewable energy projects and requires the council to follow conditions imposed by a municipality for certain projects near an existing facility with a capacity greater than 100 megawatts. *Status: Approved by the Energy & Technology Committee, sent to the House. (COST supports)*

HB-5453 – Siting Council - Makes changes to the membership of the Connecticut Siting Council, require additional cost-benefit analysis and information concerning related projects for certain proposed facilities, require additional notifications to the owner of property intended to be condemned and make additional revisions to the process for granting applications for a certificate. *Status: Approved by the GAE Committee, sent to the House. (COST supports)*

SB-3 – Broadband Access – Aimed at increasing access to affordable broadband service, aligning with the State’s definition of “digital equity”, including calling for “public broadband investments” which align with the work of the Commission on Education Technology, including the establishment of the Connecticut Education Network (CEN), which provides secure, high-speed Internet connections to more than 600 educational, municipal, and government institutions statewide. *Status: Approved by the General Law Committee, sent to the Senate. (COST supports)*

ENVIRONMENT

SB-11, the Governor's Climate Resiliency bill: Authorizes municipalities to establish "resiliency improvement districts", similar to transit improvement financing districts (TIFs) - to assist in financing infrastructure projects designed to protect against the impacts of climate change. Also 1) Requires municipalities to update Plans of Conservation & Development (POCD) to incorporate measures to address climate resiliency, Requires municipalities to include a climate change vulnerability assessment in the POCD, which may be done on a regional basis, 2) Requires municipalities to submit a report regarding the geolocation of each culvert and bridge within the municipality, although the bill provides that this may be done on a regional basis, 3) Updates the State Building Code to require buildings to be designed to provide greenhouse gas emission reduction and climate change resiliency, and 4) Requires local zoning regulations to address rising sea levels, extreme heat, and climate change. *Status: Approved by the Environment Committee, sent to the Senate. (COST evaluating)*



HB-5004 – Climate Change Impacts - Implements certain measures relating to climate change including: 1) Advancing and implementing the state’s goals for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions; 2) Phasing out of the use of natural gas; 3) Making investments in renewable energy and green economy startup businesses; 4) Incentivizing sustainable purchasing by local governments; 5) Enhancing the use of nature-based solutions to mitigate climate change. *Status: Approved by the Environment Committee, sent to the House. (COST evaluating)*

SB-191 - Municipal Food Scrap Diversion Programs - Requires municipalities to implement food scrap recycling programs by January 2028. The bill also eliminates the pilot programs that DEEP was funding to assist towns and schools in establishing food scrap collection and recycling programs. *Status: Approved by the Environment Committee, sent to the Senate. (COST opposes)*

HB-5226 - EPR Program for Consumer Batteries - Creates an Extended Producer Responsibility bill for consumer batteries. *Status: Approved by the Environment Committee, sent to the House. (COST supports)*

HB-5230 - Smoke Detectors - Prohibits the sale of any smoke detector that is powered solely by a battery unless such battery is nonreplaceable, nonremovable, and capable of powering the equipment for not less than ten years. *Status: Approved by the Environment Committee, sent to the House. (COST monitoring)*

SB-293 - Waste Characterization Study - Requires a waste characterization study and needs assessment and increases certain transportation weight limits for vehicles hauling solid waste. *Status: Approved by the Environment Committee, sent to the Senate. (COST supports)*

SB-292 – PFAS in Consumer Products - Prohibits the continued use of consumer products with intentionally added PFAS, including apparel, carpets, or rugs; cleaning products; cookware; cosmetics; dental floss; fabric treatments; children's products; menstruation products; textile furnishings; ski wax; or upholstered furniture. Also bans the use and sale of any biosolids or wastewater sludge that contains PFAS. Requires manufacturers to report to DEEP regarding PFAS included in products. *Status: Approved by the Environment Committee, sent to the Senate. (COST supports)*

SB-338 – PFAS in Firefighting Apparatus - Expands eligibility for grant funding to assist in removing PFAS from firefighting apparatus. *Status: Approved by the Public Safety Committee, sent to the Senate. (COST supports)*

SB-378 – PFAS Data Collection Study - Requires DECD to retain a consultant to perform a PFAS data collection study to assist LEPs in remediating PFAS. *Status: Died in the Appropriations Committee. (COST supported)*



SJ – 193 – Environmental Rights Amendment – Proposes a constitutional amendment to allow private citizens to bring lawsuits to challenge state and local laws and policies that may impair their right to clean air and water, and a healthful environment. *Status: Approved by the GAE Committee, sent to the Senate. (COST opposes)*

HB-5218 - Riparian Buffers/Inland Wetland Training - To develop buffers and setbacks from waterways and wetlands and require certain inland wetlands training and materials. *Status: Died in the Appropriations Committee.*

GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS & ADMINISTRATION

SB-441 - Election Fraud - Creates a Municipal Election Accountability Board and a process by which the board may exercise oversight of municipalities in the administration of their elections, primaries, and referenda. *Status: Approved by the GAE Committee, sent to the Senate. (COST opposes)*

HB-5498 – Election Security - Requires municipalities to install and monitor ballot boxes and includes several other recommendations to enhance election security. *Status: Approved by the GAE Committee, sent to the House. (COST opposes unfunded mandate)*

SB-333 - Local Charter Revisions - Repeals prohibitions against a municipality modifying certain local charter provisions pertaining to (1) the process of eminent domain, and (2) the disposition of municipal property. However, the bill retains the prohibition against modifying planning & zoning commissions. *Status: Approved by the Planning & Development Committee, sent to the Senate. (COST supports)*

HB-5494 - Charter Ballot Questions - establishes standards for proposed charter and home rule ordinance amendment ballot questions designed and allows electors to petition for review, and approval or disapproval, of such ballot questions by the Secretary of the State. *Status: Approved by the GAE Committee, sent to the House. (COST opposes)*

HB-5315 – Remote/Hybrid Municipal Meetings - Requires municipal board and commission members to be on camera when voting or speaking. Currently, board and commission members may participate by phone. *Status: Approved by the GAE Committee, sent to the House. (COST opposes, as drafted)*

SB-255 - Conflicts of Interest - Requires municipalities that do not have an adopted conflict of interest provision to adopt such a provision and requires all municipalities to submit a copy of such provision to the Office of State Ethics and post such provision on their Internet web site. *Status: Approved by the GAE Committee, sent to the Senate. (COST opposes)*



HOUSING

SB-6 – Housing Growth - Creates a \$50 million Housing Growth Fund to target additional funding to support Transit-Oriented Development based on a housing growth score that renders smaller municipalities ineligible. The Housing Growth Score is based on the number of dwelling units approved for construction within the municipality during the preceding fiscal year. SB-6 also allows a housing authority to expand its jurisdiction provided the affected municipality approves. Exempts from the property tax real property owned by, held in trust for, or leased to a municipality for workforce housing or affordable housing. *Status: Approved by the Housing Committee, sent to the Senate. (COST evaluating)*

HB-5174 - Temporary Structures for Homeless & Refugees - Authorizes the as-of-right approval of not more than eight temporary prefabricated units of up to 400 square feet on any property owned by a religious organization. The structures could be placed within 10 feet of a neighboring property for up to a year, although they must be 1000 feet from a school or cemetery. The bill was amended to limit its applicability to municipalities with a population of 25,000 or more. *Status: Approved by the Planning & Development Committee, sent to the House. (COST opposes)*

HB-5473 - Sewer Capacity Plans – Requires certain municipalities to specify how they will provide sewer service to support the development of affordable housing. The requirement applies to any municipality where single family homes make up more than 50% of the housing stock. Under the bill, the plan must include the municipality's 1) existing and planned sewer service area or areas, 2) existing or planned lots that allow for use as multifamily housing, and 3) allocations for specific daily sewage flow rates that may provide infrastructure to support the development of multifamily housing. *Status: Approved by the Planning & Development Committee, sent to the House. (COST opposes)*

HB-5474 – Housing Permit Data - Requires municipalities to provide housing permit data to the Office of Responsible Growth even though similar data is already required to be provided to the state Department of Economic & Community Development. *Status: Approved by the Planning & Development Committee, sent to the House. (COST opposes)*

HB-5475 To (1) limit the right to intervene in any proceeding involving a residential housing permit to abutters and property owners within 100 feet of any portion of the land identified in the permit application, (2) remove the right of protest against certain zoning changes by persons who do not own lots affected by such changes, (3) allow municipalities to adopt ordinances which exempt developments in certain areas from review by the inland wetlands agencies of such municipalities, (4) allow the conversion of vacant nursing homes into multifamily housing as of right. *Status: Approved by the Planning & Development Committee, sent to the House. (COST opposes)*



HB-5335 – Middle Housing Points - Provides municipalities with one-quarter housing unit-equivalent point towards its 8-30g moratorium for each middle housing unit developed as of right. *Status: Approved by the Housing Committee, sent to the House. (COST supports)*

HB-5336 – Housing & Segregation Study – Includes provisions requiring the Dept. of Housing to adopt a qualified allocation plan for federal low-income housing tax credits that prioritizes municipalities based on (a) their need for affordable housing units, as determined in their fair share allocation, and (b) having no previous developments that received these tax credits. *Status: Approved by the Housing Committee, sent to the House. (COST opposes)*

HB-5337 – Surety Bonds - (1) requires developers to provide a surety bond in conjunction with their application to build an affordable housing development under CGS § 8-30g; and (2) authorizes municipalities to use tax increment district funds to renovate certain 8-30g deed-restricted affordable housing in exchange for the owner renewing the development's affordability restrictions. *Status: Approved by the Housing Committee, sent to the House. (COST evaluating)*

SB-207 - Housing Authority Jurisdiction - SB-207 authorizes a housing authority to expand its jurisdiction without the approval or input of the municipality regarding the expanded area of jurisdiction. *Status: Approved by the Housing Committee, sent to the Senate. (COST opposes)*

HB-5390 – Transit-Oriented Development - Gives priority for certain discretionary municipal aid grants, including the Urban Act, Incentive Housing Zone, and Main Street programs, to municipalities considered “qualifying bus or rapid transit communities” that adopt certain as-of-right approvals for middle housing and certain developments that contain 10 or more dwelling units. Also directs the State Responsible Growth Coordinator to establish a fund for the expansion of water and sewerage infrastructure to assist municipalities in expanding capacity to support TOC projects. No funding included. *Status: Approved by the Planning & Development, sent to the House. (COST opposes certain provisions)*

HB-5278 – Transit -Oriented Development – Provides funding for planning grants and other technical assistance to support TOD efforts in municipalities. *Status: Approved by the Planning & Development, sent to the House. (COST supports)*

LABOR & PENSION ISSUES

SB-328 – Pension Offsets & Permanent Partial Disability Benefits – Discourages claimants from returning to work because the amount they will be receiving in Workers' Compensation benefits will be more than what they receive when employed. Claimants would also be eligible to receive additional discretionary benefits determined by the Workers' Compensation Commission that vary based on the statutory Workers' Compensation schedule. *Status: Approved by the Labor Committee, sent to the Senate. (COST opposes)*



HB-5264 – Volunteer Fire Departments and Ambulance Companies and OSHA – Subjects volunteer fire departments and ambulance companies to state OSHA laws, imposing duplicative requirements on them. *Status: Approved by the Labor and Public Safety Committees, sent to the House. (COST opposes)*

HB-5515 – Municipal Employees Retirement System - to (1) establish a Municipal Employees Retirement Commission, (2) provide for the crediting of employment of a municipal retiree who accepts employment from a municipality that is not participating in the municipal employees' retirement system, and (3) require the Comptroller to create a municipal defined contribution retirement plan. *Status: Approved by the Finance Committee, sent to the House. (COST supports)*

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

HB-5056 – Shared Services – Removes barriers in statute, collective bargaining agreements and local charters that undermine efforts to enter into shared services agreements. *Status: Approved by the Planning & Development, sent to the House. (COST supports with revisions)*

HB-5173 – Legal Notices – Allows municipalities to post legal notices on municipal websites rather than print newspapers. *Status: Approved by the Planning & Development, sent to the House. (COST supports)*

SB- 227 – Municipal Websites - Requires municipalities to move to .gov website domains by January 2026 to take advantage of greater cybersecurity protections. *Status: Approved by the Planning & Development, sent to the Senate. (COST evaluating)*

SB-226 – Sealed Bid Threshold - Increases from \$25,000 to \$50,000 the threshold for sealed bids on municipal contracts. *Status: Approved by the Senate, sent to the House. (COST supports)*

HB-5170 - Inland Wetland Commissions – Member Training – Requires each member of an inland wetland commission to complete DEEP's online training which consists of 8 modules. *Status: Approved by the Planning & Development, sent to the House. (COST opposes)*

SB-335 – Short Term Rentals – Authorizes municipalities by vote of their legislative body to adopt an ordinance requiring the licensure of short-term rental properties and regulating the operation and use of such properties. Also authorizes municipalities to retain a consultant to develop the ordinance. *Status: Approved by the Planning & Development Committee, sent to the Senate. (COST evaluating)*



PROPERTY TAX ISSUES

HB-5144 – Interest Rate on Delinquent Property Taxes - Reduces the interest rate from 18% to 12% on unpaid municipal property tax, sewer, and water bills when a municipal tax collector files a lien on the property and assigns the lien. *Status: Approved by the Banks and Planning & Development Committees, sent to the House. (COST opposes)*

HB-5172 – MV Assessment – Revises legislation to implement changes to the assessment of motor vehicles, including basing assessments on the MSRP instead of NADA. *Status: Approved by the Planning & Development Committee, sent to the House. (COST monitoring)*

HB-5396 – Interest Rate on Delinquent Tax Bills - reduces the interest rate on delinquent property tax, sewer, and water bills from 18% to 12%. *Status: Approved by the Planning & Development Committee, sent to the House. (COST opposes)*

HB-5491 – Property Tax Exemption – Veterans with Service-Connected Permanent and Total Disability Rating - To establish a property tax exemption for veterans who have a service-connected permanent and total disability rating as determined by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. *Status: Approved by the Finance Committee, sent to the Senate. (COST opposes)*

HB-5492 – Farm-related Property Tax Exemptions - To establish a property tax credit for certain farm-related capital expenses and increase the maximum property tax exemption threshold a municipality may approve for certain farm-related property. *Status: Approved by the Finance Committee, sent to the House. (COST opposes)*

HB-5516 – Homestead Property Tax Exemption – Allows municipalities, by vote of their legislative bodies (or board of selectmen if the legislative body is a town meeting), to provide a property tax exemption of between 5% and 35% of the assessed value of owner-occupied single-family homes and duplexes (including condos) that are the owner's primary residence. *Status: Approved by the Finance Committee, sent to the House.*

SB-149 – Foreclosure/Assignment of Unpaid Sewer Assessments - Prohibits the foreclosure and assignment of unpaid sewer assessments of less than \$4,000, undermining efforts to collect unpaid sewer bills that are relied upon to fund operations. *Status: Approved by the Planning & Development Committee, sent to the Senate. (COST opposes)*

SB-450 – Motor Vehicle Property Tax Exemption - to provide a five-year phase-in of a property tax exemption for motor vehicles and increase the uniform property assessment rate over the same period. *Status: Died in the Finance Committee. (COST opposed)*



SB-451 – Solar Property Tax Working Group - Establishes a working group to examine the property tax exemption under subdivision (57) of section 12-81 of the general statutes for Class I renewable energy sources that are solar photovoltaic systems. *Status: Approved by the Finance Committee, sent to the House. (COST supports)*

SB-452 – Property Tax Appeals Process - to (1) remove the ability of boards of assessment appeals to elect not to conduct an appeal for certain types of properties, (2) require assessors to provide certain information before a board of assessment appeals hearing, (3) provide for mediation before a court may hear an appeal of the action of a board of tax review or a board of assessment appeals, (4) increase the valuation threshold for when an appraisal must be filed with the court for an appeal related to the valuation of real property, and (5) replace the existing penalty related to the submission of income and expenses information by rental property owners with a penalty of five hundred dollars. *Approved by the Finance Committee, sent to the Senate. (COST opposes)*

PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

SB-3 – Drones – Beginning October 1, 2024, the bill bans the purchase of certain drones manufactured by foreign entities and bans the operation of such drones by October 1, 2025. The bill also requires adherence to certain protocols in the use of such drones to protect against cybersecurity issues. *Status: Approved by the General Law Committee, sent to the Senate. (COST seeking revisions)*

SB-179 – Ambulance Reimbursement Rates – Allows paramedic services and ambulance providers to recover the actual costs of services by requiring insurance carriers to reimburse 100% of the state rates. *Approved by the Public Health Committee, sent to the Senate. (COST supports)*

SB-337 and HB-5413 – Street Takeovers – Allows municipalities to destroy ATVs and dirt bikes that have been impounded under certain circumstances. Authorizes municipalities to adopt an ordinance to fine individuals participating in, organizing, or viewing a street takeover. Strengthens enforcement of laws preventing street takeovers by imposing additional fines and penalties, including possible jail time. *Status: Approved by the Public Safety and Judiciary Committees, sent to the Senate and House, respectively. (COST supports)*

SB-421- Police Retention & Recruitment – Includes numerous provisions to promote police recruitment and retention. However, the bill also includes provisions 1) allowing officers who retire and remain POST-certified to return to part- or full-time employment as a police officer with the municipality while collecting his or her pension; and 2) exempting \$10,000 in property taxes on property belonging to or held in trust for a police officer who resides in a distressed municipality. *Status: Approved by the Public Safety Committee, sent to the Senate. (COST supports/opposes in part)*



SB-422 – Firefighter Retention & Recruitment – Includes numerous provisions to promote firefighter recruitment and retention, such as tuition assistance and mortgage assistance. The bill also requires any municipality that hires a firefighter from another municipality within two years of the firefighter completing entry-level training to reimburse the initial hiring municipality 50% of the total training costs. *Status: Approved by the Public Safety Committee, sent to the Senate. (COST evaluating)*

SB-453 – Noise Violation Monitoring – Permits a municipality to use photo noise violation monitoring devices to enforce laws prohibiting certain motor vehicle mufflers, instruments or devices that exceed the maximum allowable decibel level. *Status: Approved by the Finance Committee, sent to the Senate. (COST supports)*

HB-5213 – Disconnected Youth – Includes several provisions to address concerns regarding disconnected youth, including requiring the Two-Generational Advisory Board to develop a plan to address strategies to assist at-risk students and reengage individuals identified as disconnected youth. The advisory board must collaborate with the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities and Connecticut Council of Small Towns in developing the plan. *Status: Approved by the Education and Transportation Committees, sent to the House.*

HB-5281 – Income Tax Credit for Volunteer Firefighters/EMS – Enhances recruitment and retention of such volunteers through an income tax credit. *Status: Died in the Finance Committee. (COST supported)*