



Substitute House Bill No. 7306

Public Act No. 19-178

AN ACT CONCERNING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES' BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON TOURISM.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Subsection (b) of section 10-399 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(b) Within available appropriations, the following measures shall be implemented to enhance the operation of visitor welcome centers:

(1) Each center shall make available space for listing events and promoting attractions, by invitation to the Connecticut tourism industry, including tourism districts, chambers of commerce and any other tourism entities involved in Connecticut tourism promotion;

(2) The Department of Economic and Community Development, in consultation with the Department of Transportation, shall develop plans for (A) consistent signage for the visitor welcome centers, and (B) highway signage regulations for privately operated centers. Signage for visitor welcome centers shall indicate the hours during which the visitor welcome centers are open;

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(3) The Department of Transportation and the Department of Economic and Community Development shall establish an "Adopt A Visitor Welcome Center" program, under which local civic organizations may provide maintenance, gardening, including wildflowers, and complimentary refreshments or any other type of service at a visitor welcome center to enhance the operation of the center;

(4) The Department of Economic and Community Development shall place a full-time year-round supervisor and a part-time assistant supervisor at the Danbury, Darien, North Stonington and West Willington centers. The responsibilities of each supervisor shall include, but not be limited to: (A) Maintaining a sufficient inventory of up-to-date brochures for dissemination to visitors, (B) scheduling staff so as to assure coverage at all times, (C) training staff, (D) compiling and maintaining statistics on center usage, (E) serving as liaison between the department, the Department of Transportation, the tourism district in which the center is located and businesses in such district, (F) maintaining quality tourism services, (G) rotating displays, (H) evaluating staff, (I) problem-solving, and (J) computing travel reimbursements for volunteer staff;

(5) Subject to available funds, the Department of Economic and Community Development shall place a seasonal full-time supervisor and a seasonal part-time assistant supervisor at the Greenwich and Westbrook centers. The department shall discontinue staffing at the Middletown, Plainfield and Wallingford centers, and shall, in conjunction with the tourism industry, seek contract workers to provide tourism services at the Westbrook center when not staffed by the state;

(6) Subject to available funds, the Department of Economic and Community Development, in conjunction with the tourism industry, shall develop and implement initial staff training and conduct periodic

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training of full-time and part-time supervisors; [.]

(7) Subject to available funds, the restroom facilities located at each visitor welcome center shall be open twenty-four hours a day.

Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established within the Department of Economic and Community Development, for administrative purposes only, a Connecticut Tourism Council. The council shall consist of (1) the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development, or the commissioner's designee, (2) the Commissioner of Transportation, or the commissioner's designee, (3) the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection, or the commissioner's designee, (4) twelve members appointed by the Governor, (A) one of whom shall represent the lodging industry, (B) one of whom shall represent a chamber of commerce, (C) one of whom shall represent a tourist attraction, (D) one of whom shall represent the arts, (E) one of whom shall represent a culturally diverse event or attraction, (F) one of whom shall represent the heritage tourism industry, (G) one of whom shall represent the airline industry, (H) one of whom shall represent the Connecticut Airport Authority, (I) one of whom shall represent a convention center and sports arena trade organization, (J) one of whom shall represent a charter bus trade organization, and (K) two of whom shall represent casino gaming facilities, (5) fourteen members appointed as follows: (A) Three by the president pro tempore of the Senate, one of whom shall represent the agritourism industry, one of whom shall represent the convention center and coliseum industry and one of whom shall represent the eastern regional tourism district established pursuant to section 10-397 of the general statutes, (B) two by the majority leader of the Senate, one of whom shall represent the events industry and one of whom shall represent the western regional tourism district established pursuant to section 10-397 of the general statutes, (C) two by the minority leader of the Senate, one of whom shall represent the marine trades industry

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and one of whom shall represent the outdoor recreation industry, (D) three by the speaker of the House of Representatives, one of whom shall represent the destination shopping industry, one of whom shall represent the restaurant industry and one of whom shall represent the central regional tourism district established pursuant to section 10-397 of the general statutes, (E) two by the majority leader of the House of Representatives, one of whom shall represent the attractions industry and one of whom shall represent the lodging industry, and (F) two by the minority leader of the House of Representatives, one of whom shall represent the museum industry and one of whom shall represent the tour and travel industry. All members appointed by the Governor shall serve a term of four years. The terms of all members appointed by members of the General Assembly shall be coterminous with the terms of such members of the General Assembly. The Commissioner of Economic and Community Development shall serve as chairperson of the council.

(b) The council shall: (1) Adopt procedures for the operation of the council; (2) review and approve or recommend changes to the strategic marketing plan developed by the Department of Economic and Community Development pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of section 10-392 of the general statutes; and (3) not later than January 1, 2021, and annually thereafter, submit a report describing tourism promotion efforts by the state and evaluating the marketing plan, developed by the Department of Economic and Community Development pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of section 10-392 of the general statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to commerce, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

Sec. 3. (*Effective from passage*) (a) For purposes of this section, "wayfinding signage" includes, but is not limited to, signs on limited

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access highways indicating attractions and services of lodging, food, information and fuel.

(b) The Commissioner of Transportation shall conduct a study relating to wayfinding signage in the state. Such study shall include, but need not be limited to, an examination of the standards for or regulation of advertising of local businesses on such signage. Not later than February 1, 2020, the commissioner shall submit a report of the results of such study, including recommended changes to the standards for or regulation of advertising of local businesses on wayfinding signage, to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to commerce and transportation, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.