

OFFICE OF FISCAL ANALYSIS

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sHB-5551

AN ACT CONCERNING PROCEEDINGS OF THE SITING COUNCIL
AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS CONCERNING CERTAIN UTILITY
EXPENDITURES.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 27 \$	FY 28 \$
CT Siting Council	CC&PUCF - Cost	Potential	Potential
CT Siting Council ¹	CC&PUCF - Cost	326,962	326,962
Consumer Counsel ¹	CC&PUCF - Cost	524,140	524,140

Note: CC&PUCF=Consumer Counsel and Public Utility Control Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill results in a cost to the state of \$851,102 in both FY 27 and FY 28 associated with new staff and consulting fees associated with several changes related to the proceedings of the Connecticut Siting Council (CSC). Additionally, the bill results in a potential cost to the CSC associated with new requirements for various meetings and public hearings.

Section 1 prohibits the CSC from starting any proceeding without the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner and Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) chairperson, or their designees. This could result in a cost of up to

¹The fringe benefit costs for employees funded out of other appropriated funds are budgeted within the fringe benefit account of those funds, as opposed to the fringe benefit accounts within the Office of the State Comptroller. The estimated active employee fringe benefit cost associated with most personnel changes for other appropriated fund employees is 85.92% of payroll in FY 27.

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\$350,000 annually associated with the cancellation or postponement of various meetings². The annual cost would depend on the number of meetings and public hearings without a DEEP or PURA designee in attendance.

Additionally, the bill requires the council to have an additional ad hoc member appointed by the applicable regional council of governments in which a proposed facility is located. Based on the number of meetings and hearings required, this is anticipated to result in a cost of \$20,000 per town (location). For every five towns where a facility is proposed, adding an ad hoc member will result in a cost of up to \$100,000.

The bill specifies that the council must employ at least one employee dedicated to providing a plain language summary of proceedings. This will result in an annual cost to the CSC of \$204,512 for an additional Siting Analyst, including a salary of \$110,000 and corresponding fringe benefits of \$94,512.

Section 2 expands the scope of various application and approval processes for projects related to certain electric transmission lines, fuel transmission facilities, or electric substations or switchyards. It is anticipated that the CSC will require a consultant with an estimated cost of \$122,450 (based on previous contracts) to meet the requirements contained within the bill. It is anticipated, given the expansion of the application and approval process and potential number of projects, the consulting fees would be an annual cost.

Sections 3, 4, 7 and 8 require the Siting Council to make the Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC) a party in certain Siting Council proceedings that the OCC determines may significantly impact electric rates and requires the consumer counsel's staff to include certain positions.

This results in a cost to OCC of \$524,140 annually. OCC will require

² For FY 25 the CSC held 25 meetings with an average cost of \$4,000 for a total of \$100,000. Additionally, CSC held 25 public hearings with an average cost of \$10,000 for a total of \$250,000.

three new full-time staff to complete the expanded duties within the bill. The new positions will include: a Utilities Examiner (annual salary of \$97,141), a Staff Attorney (annual salary of \$97,141), and a Utilities Engineer (annual salary of \$87,635). The corresponding fringe benefits associated with the new positions total \$242,223 annually.

The other sections of the bill are procedural, technical, or impact private entities, which do not result in a fiscal impact to the state.

Rate Payer Impact

The rate payer impact of the bill is indeterminate and will be dependent upon decisions made by electric distribution companies (EDC) outside of the immediate scope of the bill.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation, the number of meetings and public hearings and the required number of ad hoc members.