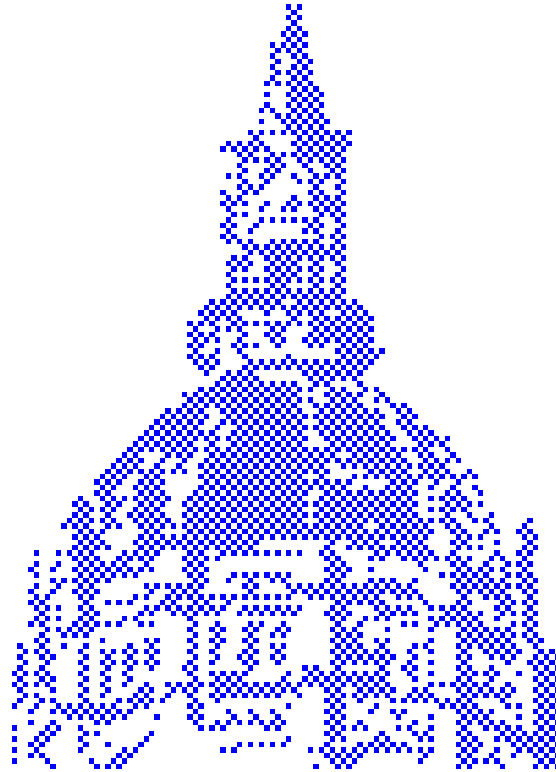




ACTS AFFECTING MUNICIPALITIES



2014-R-0176

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NOTICE TO READERS

This report provides brief highlights of new laws affecting municipalities enacted during the 2014 regular session. It does not include vetoed acts. Each summary indicates the public act (PA) or special act (SA) number and effective date. In some cases, these acts have other effective dates for provisions not related to municipalities.

Not all provisions of the acts are included here. Complete summaries of all 2014 public acts will be available when OLR publishes its Public Act Summary book; some are already on OLR's website (www.cga.ct.gov/olr/OLRPASums.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 (www.cga.ct.gov/).

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ALCOHOL

Liquor Permit Renewals

A new law allows municipalities to adopt ordinances requiring anyone applying to the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) to renew a liquor permit for on-premises alcohol consumption to simultaneously give written notice of the application to the chief law enforcement official or his or her designee in the municipality where the business is located. The official or designee may send written comments on the application to the DCP commissioner within 15 days after receiving the notice. The commissioner must consider the comments before renewing the permit ([PA 14-48](#), effective upon passage).

Prohibiting Off-Site Wine Sales and Samples

A new law creates an off-site farm winery sales and tasting permit that allows farm winery permittees to sell bottles of wine and offer free wine samples at up to seven off-site events or functions per year (events held by temporary liquor, charitable organization, or nonprofit permittees). The new law authorizes municipalities to prohibit, by ordinance or zoning regulation, off-site permittees from offering such sales or tastings within their jurisdiction ([PA 14-189](#), effective July 1, 2014).

ANIMALS

Care of Confiscated Animals

A new law increases, from \$500 total to \$500 per animal, the bond amount that an owner must post in cases where a court vests temporary ownership of neglected or cruelly treated animals in a municipality or other entity. (Under existing law, the owner may also relinquish ownership.) The new law also expands the Department of Agriculture commissioner's use of the animal abuse cost recovery and animal population control accounts by allowing him to use these accounts to reimburse a municipality for certain incurred costs exceeding the posted bond amount ([PA 14-205](#) §§ 1-2, effective upon passage).

Task Force on Treatment of Animals in Municipal Shelters

A new law establishes a nine-member task force to study (1) the humane treatment of animals in municipal and regional shelters and (2) other matters concerning such shelters. The task force must report its findings and recommendations to the legislature by January 1, 2015 ([PA 14-205](#) § 3, effective upon passage).

ENERGY AND UTILITIES

C-PACE Microgrids

A new law expands the energy improvements eligible for the C-PACE program to include participation in a microgrid that incorporates clean

energy. C-PACE allows certain building owners in participating municipalities to finance qualifying energy efficiency and clean energy improvements with a voluntary assessment on their property tax bill ([PA 14-94](#) § 23, effective upon passage).

Electricity Purchasing Pool

By law, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) operates a purchasing pool to buy electricity for state operations and certain low-income households. A new law:

1. expands the pool's purpose to include buying electricity for municipal operations in municipalities that elect to participate in it;
2. authorizes the DEEP commissioner to provide grants to municipalities that join the pool and commit to achieve the state's diversion, recycling, and reuse goals, including those provided in the state's solid waste management plan; and
3. allows the Connecticut Municipal Electric Energy Cooperative, which supplies power for municipal electric utilities, to contract with the purchasing pool or any energy improvement district to buy and sell power ([PA 14-94](#) § 9, effective upon passage).

Metropolitan District Commission (MDC)

A new law makes several changes affecting MDC, which provides regional water and sewer service. Among other things, it:

1. requires MDC to charge all customers uniform water rates and customer service charges,
2. prohibits nonmember town surcharges from exceeding the amount of the customer service charge, and
3. provides nonmember towns with nonvoting representation on the district board ([SA 14-21](#), various effective dates).

Sewer Benefit Assessment Appeals

A new law allows municipalities to adopt ordinances authorizing their boards of assessment appeals to hear benefit assessment appeals related to a municipal sewer system. A person aggrieved by the board's decision may appeal to the Superior Court. In municipalities that do not adopt such an ordinance, anyone aggrieved by a sewer benefit assessment may appeal to the Superior Court, as under existing law ([PA 14-183](#) § 1, effective October 1, 2014).

ENVIRONMENT

Connecticut's Seed Law

A new law makes numerous changes to Connecticut's seed law, which establishes labeling requirements for seed sold, offered for sale, or transported in Connecticut. Among these changes is a provision specifying that the state seed law supersedes and preempts any municipal law or ordinance regarding the registration, sale, labeling,

storage, transportation, distribution, notification, or use of seeds ([PA 14-223](#) § 6, effective October 1, 2014).

Exemption from Transfer Act

The Transfer Act regulates the transfer of certain polluted real properties and business operations. It contains numerous exemptions based on the nature of, and parties involved in, the process for changing ownership. A new law additionally exempts from the act property municipalities take by eminent domain under any statute, not just those authorizing takings for redevelopment purposes. It also exempts these properties from the act after a municipality conveys them to another party, as existing law allows for sites taken under the redevelopment statutes ([PA 14-88](#), effective upon passage).

Heritage Park Designation

A new law allows the DEEP commissioner to designate or alter a heritage park without (1) receiving approval from affected municipalities' legislative bodies and (2) appointing a board to advise him on the park's boundaries, name, and theme, as prior law required. It also requires the commissioner to create a plan to develop and promote a heritage park, but eliminates the need for him to appoint an advisory board. Under prior law, both advisory boards consisted of at least 10 members from the

municipalities in which the park or proposed park was located ([PA 14-43](#), effective upon passage).

Hunting and Fishing Licenses

A new law makes several changes to the statutes concerning hunting and fishing licenses, which are issued by town clerks. Among other things, it:

1. requires 16-year-olds to obtain fishing licenses to fish in Connecticut waters, to conform to current licensing practices;
2. exempts from the fishing license requirement secondary school students participating in school fishing events or field trips that teach fishing techniques; and
3. changes certain hunting and fishing license fees, including reducing specific fees by 50% for 16- and 17-year-old residents ([PA 14-201](#), effective January 1, 2015).

Liability for Growing Running Bamboo

A new law prohibits people from planting, or letting anyone plant, "running bamboo" on their property within 40 feet of abutting property or a public right of way. Prior law prohibited such planting within 100 feet unless the bamboo was properly contained. As under prior law, a violator is subject to a \$100 fine, and each day of a continuing violation is a separate offense. The new law also deems running bamboo that grows beyond a person's property boundary a nuisance ([PA 14-100](#), effective upon passage).

GRANTS AND AID

Aquatic Invasive Species

A new law establishes an aquatic invasive species management grant and prevention and education program for DEEP to administer. Under the program, DEEP may, among other things, provide grants to municipalities for aquatic invasive species management efforts ([PA 14-217](#) § 248, effective July 1, 2014).

Clean Water Funding

A new law increases, by 5%, the Clean Water funding amount a particular town receives for the design and construction costs of six types of eligible water quality projects. (Presumably the amount will only be awarded for one type of project). It specifies that the increased funds are for a municipality with a 2012 population of between 40,000 and 42,000 and a municipal sewer system providing a regional treatment capacity to at least five abutting municipalities with fewer than 5,000 people each (i.e., Norwich). Under the new law, a loan is available for the remainder of the project's costs, but the loan must not exceed the total cost ([PA 14-217](#) § 86, effective July 1, 2014).

Municipal Revenue Sharing Grants

The budget act requires the Department of Revenue Services commissioner to deposit \$12.7 million of sales and use tax payments for FY

15 into the Municipal Revenue Sharing Account. It requires the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) secretary to distribute the funds to municipalities according to a specified municipal revenue sharing formula. Under the formula, the grants are distributed as follows:

1. 50% on a per capita basis and
2. 50% according to an existing property tax relief formula that apportions funds based on a municipality's population, adjusted equalized net grand list per capita, and per capita income of town residents ([PA 14-47](#) § 46, effective July 1, 2014).

Nutmeg Network Demonstration Projects

A new law authorizes the OPM secretary to use \$1,311,198 in FY 15 from the regional planning incentive account for a grant to the Capitol Region Council of Governments and the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology to conduct demonstration projects related to the statewide high-speed network (i.e., Nutmeg Network). Municipalities are eligible to participate in the projects if they are (1) members of any council of governments (COG), (2) connected to the Nutmeg Network, (3) willing to participate, and (4) capable of participating successfully. Participating municipalities must be selected in consultation with the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities ([PA 14-217](#) § 229, effective July 1, 2014).

Phosphorus Removal Grants

A new law expands the number of municipalities eligible to receive increased Clean Water Fund grants for certain phosphorus removal projects (those that result in levels at or below 0.2 milligrams per liter of effluent discharge). It does so by extending eligibility for the increased grants, which cover 50% of phosphorus removal costs, to all municipalities with contracts entered into by July 1, 2018.

Prior law limited eligibility to the first three construction contracts awarded by municipalities by that date, but if there were more than three eligible projects, DEEP had to prioritize them based on permitted phosphorus discharge limits and the amount of phosphorus removed each year. The new law retains this prioritization for issuing the funds ([PA 14-13](#), effective upon passage).

Property Tax Relief Grants

A new law requires OPM to distribute a \$1,126,814 appropriation for Property Tax Relief to certain municipalities as additional grants in lieu of taxes for FY 15, as follows:

Municipality	FY 15 Grant
Colebrook	\$15,531
East Granby	74,202
Glastonbury	8,157
Goshen	4,285
Granby	881
Harwinton	1,234
Montville	345,327

Municipality	FY 15 Grant
Newington	73,979
Norwich	3,211
Plymouth	577
Ridgefield	12,030
Voluntown	45,275
Waterford	60,232
Windsor Locks	481,893

Of this appropriation, \$778,276 is intended to hold harmless municipalities whose combined FY 15 state-owned property payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT), college and nonprofit hospital PILOT, and Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan Fund grant payments are lower than in FY 14. Montville (\$345,327) and Norwich (\$3,211) receive additional payments ([PA 14-217](#) § 234, effective July 1, 2014).

Youth Employment Program

A new law requires \$1 million of the \$5.5 million FY 15 appropriation for the Labor Department's Connecticut Youth Employment Program to be distributed through the Workforce Investment Boards (WIB) to nine cities' youth employment programs (Bridgeport, East Hartford, Hartford, Meriden, New Britain, New Haven, Stamford, Waterbury, and Windham). The state's five WIBs are responsible for oversight, strategic planning, and policymaking related to workforce development activities ([PA 14-217](#) § 211, effective July 1, 2014).

MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES

Municipal Pension Deficit Funding Bonds

The law allows municipalities to issue bonds to pay for unfunded past pension obligations. If a municipality issues these bonds, it must appropriate money for, and contribute to its pension plan, at least the actuarially required contribution (ARC) in each fiscal year that it has outstanding bonds for the plan. A new law creates a reduced contribution formula, for the first four years of the bond issuance, for any municipality in New Haven county with a population of less than 65,000 that issues such bonds by June 30, 2015. It requires such municipalities to make payments as shown below.

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Required Contribution</i>
1 (fiscal year in which the bonds are issued)	At least 50% of the ARC
2	Lesser of (1) 55% of the ARC or (2) \$5 million more than the prior year's contribution
3	Lesser of (1) 70% of the ARC or (2) \$5 million more than the prior year's contribution
4	Lesser of (1) 80% of the ARC or (2) \$5 million more than the prior year's contribution
5 and each fiscal year thereafter	100% of the ARC

([PA 14-217](#) § 219, effective upon passage)

Workers' Compensation

A new law changes how the default rates for workers' compensation-related services at hospitals and ambulatory surgical centers (ASC) are determined when an injured employee's employer or workers' compensation insurance carrier (the "payor") does not negotiate rates with the hospital or ASC. It requires the Workers' Compensation Commission chairman, by January 1, 2015, to establish and publish Medicare-based formulas for determining these rates. Starting 90 days after the chairman publishes the formulas, the new law caps the default rates at the reimbursements listed in the formulas. If the services are not covered by Medicare, the chairman must determine the rates, in consultation with certain entities. The payor can also negotiate different rates with the hospital or ASC ([PA 14-167](#), effective upon passage).

MUNICIPAL PROPERTY

Purchasing Certain Municipal Property

A new law prohibits scrap metal processors, junk dealers, or junkyard owners or operators (processors, dealers, or owners) from purchasing or receiving property which they suspect, or have reasonable cause to believe, is municipal property, unless the person delivering the property simultaneously presents a letter from the municipality authorizing the

transaction. Processors, dealers, or owners must send payment for the property to the municipal official designated in the letter.

The new law extends the penalties under existing law for violating scrap metal sales laws to processors, dealers, or owners who violate the act's requirements concerning municipal property ([PA 14-83](#), effective October 1, 2014).

Utilities' Tree Trimming

A new law makes several changes to the process telephone, telecommunications, and electric distribution companies must follow before conducting vegetation management activities (pruning or removing any trees or shrubs around their poles and wires). Among other changes, it requires utilities to obtain written affirmative consent from a municipality before conducting vegetation management on the municipality's property ([PA 14-151](#), effective upon passage).

PROPERTY TAXES

490 Program

A new law makes procedural changes to the "490 program," in which eligible farm, forest, open space, and maritime heritage land is assessed for property tax purposes based on its current use, rather than its full market value. Among other things, it (1) modifies notice and filing requirements for transfers of 490 property that are exempt from the

conveyance tax and (2) specifies, with one exception, that these exempt transfers do not affect the 10-year period used to determine a landowner's liability for the tax if the land is subsequently sold or changes use ([PA 14-33](#) §§ 3-6, effective October 1, 2014, and applicable to assessment years starting on or after that date).

Delinquent Property Tax Enforcement Program

By law, the Department of Motor Vehicles' (DMV) delinquent property tax enforcement program prevents people with delinquent motor vehicle or snowmobile property taxes from registering motor vehicles, snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, or vessels. A new law eliminates the requirement that municipalities pay to participate in the program. It also requires participating municipalities to report property tax delinquencies to DMV at least once a month ([PA 14-19](#) §1, effective July 1, 2015).

Enterprise Zone Designation for Areas within Wallingford and Thomaston

A new law allows Wallingford and Thomaston each to designate an area as an enterprise zone and requires the Department of Economic and Community Development commissioner to approve these designations on or after July 1, 2014. Businesses located in these zones receive the same benefits as those in existing enterprise zones, including

property and real estate conveyance tax exemptions ([PA 14-217](#) § 177, effective July 1, 2014).

Exemptions for Farm Machinery, Buildings, and Horses

A new law expands the existing property tax exemption for certain farm machinery to up to \$100,000 in assessed value, rather market value. By law, municipalities may grant an additional exemption of \$100,000 of assessed value for such machinery.

It also allows a municipality, by vote of its legislative body (or its board of selectmen, if the legislative body is a town meeting), to fully exempt all horses and ponies from property taxes, regardless of their use. Existing law exempts from the tax (1) horses and ponies used exclusively for farming and (2) the first \$1,000 of assessed value for those used for other purposes.

By law, farmers must apply annually, by November 1, for property tax exemptions for farm machinery, horses, and buildings. The new law extends this deadline for farmers who have been granted a filing extension for their personal property declarations, to the extended deadline set by the assessor ([PA 14-33](#) §§ 1-2, effective October 1, 2014, and applicable to assessment years starting on or after that date).

Exemptions for Solar Thermal and Geothermal Energy Systems

A new law limits property tax exemptions for solar thermal (e.g., solar heated water) and geothermal energy systems to the difference between the value of the property with the installed system and the value with only the conventional portion of the system. By law, these property tax exemptions have certain restrictions and apply to (1) single-family and two- to four-unit multifamily residential property, (2) farms, and (3) commercial or industrial property ([PA 14-94](#) §§ 56-57, effective upon passage and applicable to assessment years starting on and after October 1, 2014).

Extended Deadlines for Claiming Property Tax Exemptions

A new law allows taxpayers in seven municipalities to receive manufacturing machinery and equipment (MME) property tax exemptions for particular grand list years even though they missed the statutory deadline for filing necessary documents with the tax assessor. It applies to taxpayers in Berlin, Danbury, Farmington, East Haven, Monroe, New Haven, and Seymour. The new law also allows a nonprofit organization to receive an exemption for real property on Middletown's 2013 grand list even though it missed the

deadline for filing the required property tax exemption statement ([SA 14-4](#), effective July 1, 2014).

Fixed Assessments for Retail Development Projects

A new law expands a municipality's authority to fix property tax assessments on certain retail development projects. Under prior law, a municipality could fix the tax assessment for a range of real estate development projects for a specified number of years, based on the value of the development's improvements. The new law allows a municipality, by ordinance, to set its own schedule for fixing assessments on improvements constructed for retail business use in designated areas. It also expands a municipality's authority to fix assessments for personal property to include such property located at wholesale and retail businesses, rather than just manufacturing facilities ([PA 14-174](#) §§ 5-6, effective October 1, 2014).

Hartford Homeownership Incentive Program

A new law requires Hartford to establish a homeownership incentive program for two designated census blocks that meet specified criteria. It establishes property tax abatements and state income tax exemptions for homeowners and eligible renters who live in the designated area. The exemptions and abatements last until

the ownership rate in the area reaches specified levels ([PA 14-174](#) § 3, effective July 1, 2015).

Hartford Property Assessment Ratio Adjustments

By law, Hartford's assessor must annually adjust the assessment ratio for residential property to reflect the growth in property taxes levied over the previous fiscal year, adjusted for inflation. A new law (1) changes the fiscal year for which the assessor must adjust the tax levy for inflation from the current to the prior one and (2) specifies the source he must use when doing so ([PA 14-174](#) § 4, effective October 1, 2014).

Hartford Property Tax Assessment Adjustments for Owner-Occupied Residences

A new law authorizes Hartford to provide property tax relief to residents who own and reside in their homes by keeping the assessment ratio for their homes lower than the ratio for nonowner-occupied residences ([PA 14-174](#) § 4, effective October 1, 2014).

Local Option Abatement for Historic Agricultural Structures

A new law allows municipalities to establish a property tax incentive program to encourage the preservation of certain historic agricultural structures (i.e., qualifying barns, stone walls, and other agricultural structures that are at least 75 years old). Under the program, a

property owner agrees to offer a municipality a preservation easement for the historic structure for up to 10 years in exchange for a property tax abatement. If the easement is accepted, the owner must maintain the structure in keeping with its historic integrity and character ([PA 14-101](#), effective upon passage).

Local Option Property Tax Relief Program for Senior or Disabled Homeowners

Existing law authorizes municipalities to provide property tax relief to qualifying homeowners who are seniors or have disabilities, for real property they own and occupy as their principal residence. A new law allows them to offer the tax relief to a qualifying resident who occupies, as his or her principal residence, a property held in trust for him or her ([PA 14-124](#), effective October 1, 2014, and applicable to assessment years starting on or after that date).

Pilot Program for Municipal Profit-Based Tax Assessments

A new law establishes an OPM-administered pilot program under which municipalities may offer a limited number of commercial businesses and property owners the option of paying taxes based on the business' net profits instead of the property's fair market value, as prior law required ([PA 14-174](#) §§ 1-2, effective July 1, 2014, and applicable to assessment years beginning on or after October 1, 2014).

Procedure for Claiming Exemptions for MME

A new law requires owners claiming an MME exemption to apply to local assessors, on a form they prescribe, by November 1 annually. It extends existing provisions regarding filing deadline extensions and retroactive exemption approvals to the MME exemption. It also gives boards of selectmen the authority to grant retroactive exemptions for MME and other property tax exemptions in municipalities where the local legislative body is a town meeting ([PA 14-183](#) §§ 2-4, effective October 1, 2014, and applicable to assessment years starting on or after that date).

Revaluation Delay

A new law allows municipalities to delay a revaluation scheduled to be implemented in the 2013 or 2014 assessment year until, at the latest, the 2015 assessment year. It allows a similar delay for municipalities phasing in assessment increases from an earlier revaluation ([PA 14-19](#) § 2, effective upon passage).

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

Complaints about Police Officers

A new law requires the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST), by July 1, 2015, to develop and implement a written policy for the State Police and municipal police departments on accepting, processing, and investigating public complaints

alleging police misconduct. Once POST implements its complaint policy, each law enforcement agency must either adopt it or develop and implement its own policy, making it available (1) at the town hall or another municipal building, other than the building where the agency is located, and (2) on the agency's or municipality's website ([PA 14-166](#), effective July 1, 2014).

Consolidation of Dispatch Services

A new law allows municipalities that enter into interlocal agreements to consolidate dispatch services (emergency services dispatched in response to 9-1-1 calls) to establish a governing board for the consolidated services that includes a representative from each participating municipality. Under existing law, unchanged by the new law, municipalities that enter into interlocal agreements may establish advisory boards ([PA 14-179](#), effective October 1, 2014).

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Primary Service Area Responders (PSARs)

By law, a "primary service area" is a specific geographic area to which the Department of Public Health (DPH) assigns an EMS provider (PSAR) for each category of emergency medical response services. A new law makes several changes to the statutes concerning EMS and PSARs. Among other things, it:

1. requires each municipality, in consultation with its assigned PSAR and DPH, to update its local EMS plan as it determines necessary;
2. requires DPH, at least every five years, to review local EMS plans and PSARs' provision of services under them;
3. specifies the conditions under which a municipality can petition for a PSAR's removal;
4. requires a PSAR to notify the chief elected official or chief executive officer of the municipality where the PSAR is assigned before it sells or transfers more than half of its ownership interest or assets; and
5. requires, under certain circumstances, municipalities seeking a change in their PSAR to submit to DPH alternative local EMS plans. ([PA 14-217](#) §§ 19-22, effective October 1, 2014, except the provisions on PSAR sales and buyer approval are effective upon passage).

Fire Safety Enforcement Officials

Among other things, a new law:

1. streamlines the process for certifying fire marshals, investigators, and inspectors;
2. requires, to be eligible for certification, fire marshals and fire inspectors to have at least three years' experience in fire, hazardous material, or police work, or equivalent experience; and
3. allows the certifying entities to accept programs and training developed by private institutions, not just public

agencies, as proof of qualification for certification ([PA 14-137](#), effective October 1, 2014).

Funding for Municipal Health Departments and Local Health Districts

As a prerequisite to receiving annual funding from DPH, a new law requires municipal health departments, as well as local health districts with populations of 50,000 or more or that serve three or more municipalities, to provide a basic health program that, among other things:

1. monitors the community's health status to identify and solve problems;
2. investigates and diagnoses health problems and hazards in the community; and
3. informs, educates, and empowers people in the community regarding health issues ([PA 14-226](#), effective October 1, 2014).

Nonprofit Hospital Conversions

When a nonprofit hospital seeks state approval for transferring assets or operational control to a for-profit entity, a new law requires the hospital and the entity to hold a public hearing in the affected municipality ([PA 14-168](#) § 9, effective upon passage).

Registered Sex Offenders

A new law requires the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) to notify a municipal chief executive officer (CEO)

when someone required to register as a sex offender (1) is released into the community or notifies DESPP of a change of address and (2) resides or plans to reside in the CEO's municipality. DESPP must email this notice and provide the CEO with the same registry information that DESPP posts publicly on the Internet about the registrant ([PA 14-213](#), effective July 1, 2014).

MISCELLANEOUS

Abandoned Vessels

Among other things, a new law making extensive changes to the administrative process for seizing and disposing of abandoned vessels extends to municipalities and emergency responders the authority to initiate that process. Under prior law, only officers authorized to enforce the state's boating laws could initiate the process (e.g., police officers, state conservation police officers, town marine officers, lake patrolmen, and harbor masters) ([PA 14-57](#), effective January 1, 2015).

Administration of Oaths

A new law extends to all municipal chief elected officials the authority to administer oaths in matters before them. Prior law granted this authority only to first selectmen in matters before the board of selectmen.

The new law specifies that oaths administered by chief elected officials between November 1, 2011 and its passage must not be considered

invalid solely because the official lacked statutory authority to administer the oath ([PA 14-146](#), effective upon passage).

Bazaar or Raffle License Applications

A new law makes several changes to the laws affecting bazaars and raffles, including:

1. changing the initial governmental entity to which an organization submits its bazaar or raffle license application and fees, from the local municipality to DCP;
2. extending, to all organizations authorized to hold a bazaar or raffle, the ability to hold the event in a municipality other than the one that granted the permit; and
3. eliminating the requirement that organizations submit a post-event verified statement to the municipality ([PA 14-24](#), effective October 1, 2014).

Exemption from Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals Procedure

A new law suspends the applicability of the affordable housing land use appeals procedure ([CGS § 8-30g](#)), from January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014, in any municipality in which at least 6% of the housing stock is classified as affordable and the planning and zoning commission:

1. approved an affordable housing development application on or after November 1, 2013;

2. denied such an application, which became the subject of an appeal that was pending as of April 1, 2014; and
3. was considering an affordable housing development application as of April 15, 2014.

Under the new law, the suspension applies as of January 1, 2014 to any application filed, or appeal pending, in a municipality meeting the above criteria ([PA 14-217](#) § 222, effective upon passage).

Exemption from Real Estate Conveyance Tax

A new law authorizing courts to issue a judgment of "foreclosure by market sale," exempts such transfers from the real estate conveyance tax. (Foreclosures by market sale are open market sales courts approve upon a lender's request and with the borrower's consent.) Existing law already exempts from the tax transfers resulting from other types of foreclosures. (The real estate conveyance tax has two parts: a state tax and a municipal tax.) ([PA 14-84](#), effective January 1, 2015, pursuant to [PA 14-217](#) §§ 207 & 249.)

Harbor Point and Steel Point Special Taxing Districts

A new law staggers the terms of Stamford's Harbor Point and Bridgeport's Steel Point special taxing district directors ([PA 14-102](#), effective July 1, 2014).

Livable Communities Initiative

A new law requires the Aging Commission, by January 1, 2015, as part of its “Livable Communities” initiative, to recognize communities that have implemented initiatives allowing individuals to age in place and stay in the home setting they choose. Recognized initiatives must include (1) affordable and accessible housing, (2) community and social services, (3) planning and zoning regulations, (4) walkability, and (5) transportation-related infrastructure ([PA 14-73](#) § 1, effective July 1, 2014).

Merged Regional Planning Organizations

A new law replaces existing transitional rules for merged RPOs (i.e., COGs, councils of elected officials (CEO), and regional planning agencies (RPA)) in planning regions in which a new COG is established (i.e., certified). Under prior law, transitional rules applied only when at least one CEO or RPA existed in a planning region in which a new COG was established. Under the new law, similar transitional rules apply when two or more RPOs exist in a planning region in which a new COG is established. (Revised local planning regions will go into effect on January 1, 2015.) ([PA 14-217](#) §§ 228 & 256, effective upon passage.)

Neglected Cemeteries

A new law establishes a funding source to help municipalities cover the cost of maintaining neglected burial grounds and cemeteries. It establishes the “neglected cemetery account,” funded by fees DPH receives for death certificates, as a separate, nonlapsing General Fund account and requires the OPM secretary to use the account's funds to maintain neglected burial grounds and cemeteries. It allows municipalities to apply for funds on a form and in the manner the OPM secretary prescribes.

The new law protects municipalities and their employees, officers, and agents from civil or criminal liability arising from their care and maintenance of a neglected burial ground or cemetery. It also specifically allows municipalities to mow the lawns of neglected burial grounds or cemeteries, and makes minor and technical changes regarding municipal authority to care for such sites ([PA 14-217](#) §§ 204-206, effective October 1, 2014).

Notification of Polling Place Hours Extensions

A new law allows each candidate on the ballot in an election to provide, to the registrars of voters in any municipality in which the ballot is to be voted on, the name and contact information (including instructions for leaving a message) for an individual who should be notified if polling place hours have been or may be extended.

It requires registrars, if they are aware of a court proceeding or order concerning an extension of polling place hours, to immediately notify any individuals identified by the candidates ([PA 14-188](#) § 17, effective upon passage).

Point Stratford Infrastructure Improvement District

A new law provides a procedure through which voters and nonresident property owners in Stratford may form a special taxing district in an area encompassing a former army engine plant site to provide services and finance infrastructure improvements there ([SA 14-12](#), effective July 1, 2014).

Prevailing Wage Law

Under the state's prevailing wage law, contractors must submit monthly certified payrolls to the contracting state or local agency verifying that they have met the law's requirements. A new law allows contractors to electronically submit, maintain, or certify certain records, notices, and certifications required for prevailing wage jobs.

It also broadens the circumstances requiring a state or local contracting agency to certify a prevailing wage job's total cost. Under existing law, the agency must do so before awarding a contract subject to prevailing wage requirements. The new law additionally requires it to do so before awarding any purchase orders, bid packages, or other designations subject to prevailing wage requirements ([PA 14-44](#), effective July 1, 2015).

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