ROME SMITH KOWALSKI

Legislative Report for CMTA
Linda Kowalski
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We are pleased to provide this update on government relations issues for the Connecticut Marine Trades Association.

State Budget and Agency Legislation

The Office of Policy and Management (OPM) is directing state agencies to provide options that include cuts of five or ten percent to their budgets, indicating that the next biennium will be very tight. Comptroller Sean Scanlon issued a new estimate last week that the current budget (Fiscal Year 2025) is running a surplus of $109.2 million in the General Fund and $127.4 in the Special Transportation Fund.

The next biennium will cover Fiscal Year 2026 (July 1, 2025—June 30, 2026) and Fiscal Year 2027 (July 1, 2026—June 20, 2027). We have been told that new spending will be in the range of $900 million and that $75 million "is already spoken for" in prior commitments such as salary increases and cost-of-living adjustments for entitlements. This new two-year budget will be the major legislation considered in the 2025 legislative session.

Meanwhile, state agencies and departments have submitted their 2025 legislative packages to OPM. Proposals that are approved by OPM will be introduced as "agency bills" in February once the governor releases his proposed biennial budget.

Political and Election Update

There are 25 days until the November 5 election. Our summary of the various races follows.

- President—The Harris/Walz ticket, according to a recent poll, is leading Trump/Vance by 16 points. They are likely to win the state and, with that, the seven electoral votes.

- U.S. Senate—U.S. Senator Chris Murphy will cruise to a solid win for a third term. His name is on a short list for Secretary of State in a Harris administration.

- U.S. House—Four of the five incumbent U.S. Representative are likely to win re-election handily. This includes U.S. Rep. John Larson (D/1), U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney (D/2), U.S. Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D/3) and U.S. Rep. Jim Himes (D/4). The final race in the 5th congressional district is considered a toss-up between incumbent Democratic U.S.

Rep. Jahana Hayes and Republican former state Senator George Logan. This is a rematch of their 2022 contest which Hayes won narrowly.

- Connecticut House—The Democratic party controls the state House by a margin of 98—53. This could change in a few seats, but continued control by the Democratic party is a virtual certainty. The last time the Republicans won control of the chamber was 40 years ago in 1984 as a result of the Reagan landslide.

- Connecticut Senate—Democrats enjoy a 2:1 margin in the state Senate with 24 seats to 12 for the Republicans. Of seats that are heatedly contested, most observers are watching two Republicans incumbents who are being pressed by their Democratic challengers: State Senator Tony Hwang (R/28) whose district is anchored by Fairfield and state Senator Ryan Fazio (R/36) whose district is anchored by Greenwich.

Our government relations team will provide CMTA with an election summary once the polls close and votes are counted.

Interim Period and 2025 Legislative Session

The CT Port Authority is continuing their search for a new executive director. Whether legislation is proposed next year to revamp the authority is unknown at this time. Last year, the governor had proposed folding the CPA into the CT Airport Authority structure.

We will be advocating for an appropriation to the new Small Harbor Improvement Projects account. Under this new law, Public Act 24-48, that was a CMTA priority, marinas are eligible to seek funding from this account.

It is possible that progressive legislators will seek additional sources of funding. As always in a budget year, we will continue to protect the 2.99 sales tax rate on the purchases of vessels.

We continue to meet with state Sen. Cathy Osten, U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney and staff in the governor's office about dredging issues. The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) has a key role in the process, and we meet with them on a regular basis. It is possible that there could be legislation on dredging next session.

Issues such as right to repair, a bill to lower the blood alcohol content from .08 to .05, boating safety and further legislation to ban or restrict products containing PFAS, may be introduced.

We will continue to keep you updated as the General Election approaches.