
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5154

AN ACT CONCERNING WATER USAGE AND CONSERVATION DURING DROUGHT CONDITIONS.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Water Planning Council to:

1. review state and local authorizations on drought events in Connecticut, including state and local processes and authorities for issuing notices about changing drought intensity and any resulting voluntary or mandatory water use restrictions during these changes in intensity and
2. adopt a comprehensive state drought plan based on this review.

To complete its required work, the bill permits the council to consult with its advisory group.

The bill requires the council to report on the state drought plan and any recommended legislative changes to implement the plan to the Environment and Public Health committees by February 1, 2019.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

REPORT CONTENTS

Under the bill, the Water Planning Council's report must include its suggestions for (1) an appropriate interval for updating the state drought plan and (2) including in that plan:

1. a synthesis of state and local authorities, processes, and water use restrictions;
2. recommendations for initiating drought advisories, watches, warnings, and emergencies in the state, including the appropriate depletion level of reservoirs and public drinking

- water supplies to trigger such actions;
3. recommendations for the resulting voluntary and mandatory water use restrictions during these situations, including implementing mandatory restrictions;
 4. an effective public notification system for these situations that (a) uses available Internet websites and social media of affected water companies and municipalities where these water companies operate and (b) recommends the appropriate drought level for using emergency notification systems; and
 5. the viability and effectiveness of enforcement mechanisms designed to assure compliance with mandatory water use restrictions.

BACKGROUND

Legislative History

The House referred the bill (File 349) to the Environment Committee, which reported a substitute that eliminates a reference requiring that the council's recommendations on initiating drought situations include standardization.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute
Yea 24 Nay 2 (03/26/2018)

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute
Yea 27 Nay 1 (04/25/2018)