
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6637

AN ACT REQUIRING AN INVASIVE SPECIES STAMP FOR THE OPERATION OF A MOTORBOAT ON THE WATERS OF THE STATE.

SUMMARY

This bill requires a person who registers a vessel (i.e., generally any type of watercraft except a seaplane) in Connecticut or in another state and who intends to operate it, or allow it to be operated, on state waters, to purchase an invasive species stamp. The stamp costs \$5 for in-state vessels and \$20 for out-of-state vessels.

A person registering a vessel in Connecticut with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) must purchase the stamp from DMV. The stamp expires with the registration, which expires on April 30 of the year following its issuance. A person with a vessel registered out of state must purchase the stamp from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). An out-of-state vessel's stamp expires on April 30 of the year following its issuance.

The bill requires DMV and DEEP to deposit all invasive species stamp proceeds into the renamed Connecticut lakes, rivers, and ponds preservation account. Under current law, the account is specific to lakes and ponds. The bill expands its purposes to include rivers.

Lastly, the bill requires that 80% of the invasive species stamp proceeds be used by DEEP for (1) programs to eradicate aquatic invasive species and cyanobacteria blooms; (2) education and public outreach programs about protecting and preserving state lakes, rivers, and ponds; and (3) grants to state and municipal agencies and nonprofit organizations to conduct research and provide education on managing state lakes, rivers, and ponds.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2019

CONNECTICUT LAKES, RIVERS, AND PONDS PRESERVATION ACCOUNT

The bill renames the Connecticut lakes and ponds preservation account as the Connecticut lakes, rivers, and ponds preservation account. (By law, it is a separate, nonlapsing General Fund account.) It also expands the account's purposes to include rivers.

Thus, the bill requires the DEEP commissioner to use the money in the account for the following purposes:

1. restoring and rehabilitating Connecticut lakes, rivers, and ponds;
2. DEEP programs to eradicate aquatic invasive species and cyanobacteria blooms;
3. education and public outreach programs to enhance the public's understanding of the need to preserve and protect the state's lakes, rivers, and ponds;
4. allocating grants to state and municipal agencies and nonprofit organizations to conduct research and provide public education on managing state lakes, rivers, and ponds;
5. funding services that support the protection and conservation of the state's lakes, rivers, and ponds; and
6. reimbursing DMV for the cost of producing, issuing, renewing, and replacing Save Our Lakes commemorative license plates, including administrative expenses.

By law, proceeds from DMV's sale of Save Our Lakes plates are deposited to the account. The DEEP commissioner may also receive private donations to the account.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 28 Nay 0 (03/08/2019)