



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 415

January Session, 2021

House Bill No. 6653

House of Representatives, April 13, 2021

The Committee on Public Health reported through REP. STEINBERG of the 136th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING HEALTHY HOMES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 8-446 of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2021*):

3 (a) There is established an account to be known as the "Healthy
4 Homes Fund" which shall be a separate, nonlapsing account within the
5 General Fund. The account shall contain any moneys required by law to
6 be deposited in the account. Moneys in the account shall be expended
7 by the Department of Housing for the purposes of:

8 (1) Funding of not more than one million dollars, from remittances
9 transferred pursuant to section 38a-331 for the period beginning January
10 1, 2019, and ending December 31, 2019, shall be remitted to the
11 Department of Economic and Community Development to be used for
12 grants-in-aid to homeowners with homes located in the immediate
13 vicinity of the West River in the Westville section of New Haven and
14 Woodbridge for structurally damaged homes due to subsidence and to

15 homeowners with homes abutting the Yale Golf Course in the Westville
16 section of New Haven for damage to such homes from water infiltration
17 or structural damage due to subsidence; and

18 (2) Funding a program, and any related administrative expense, to
19 reduce health and safety hazards in residential dwellings in
20 Connecticut, including, but not limited to, lead, radon and other
21 contaminants or conditions, through removal, remediation, abatement
22 and other appropriate methods. For purposes of this subdivision,
23 "administrative expense" means any administrative or other cost or
24 expense incurred by the Department of Housing in carrying out the
25 provisions of this [section] subdivision, including, but not limited to, the
26 hiring of necessary employees and entering into necessary contracts; [.]
27 and

28 (3) Funding the pilot program established pursuant to section 2 of
29 this act.

30 (b) The Department of Housing shall notify the Department of Public
31 Health not later than thirty days after the deposit of remittances in the
32 Healthy Homes Fund pursuant to subdivision (2) of subsection (c) of
33 section 38a-331. Not later than thirty days after the deposit of
34 remittances pursuant to subdivision (2) of subsection (c) of section 38a-
35 331, the Department of Public Health shall notify each municipal health
36 department in the state annually regarding funds available pursuant to
37 the Healthy Homes Fund established pursuant to subsection (a) of this
38 section.

39 (c) Not later than January 1, 2020, and annually thereafter, the
40 Commissioner of Housing shall report to the joint standing committees
41 of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to
42 housing, planning and development and appropriations and the
43 budgets of state agencies, in accordance with section 11-4a, regarding
44 the status of the Healthy Homes Fund established pursuant to this
45 section and all moneys deposited into and expended by the Department
46 of Housing pursuant to said account. Any such report may be submitted
47 electronically.

48 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2021*) (a) On or before January 1,
49 2022, the Department of Housing shall establish a pilot program to
50 annually provide not less than five hundred residential dwellings with
51 (1) energy efficiency retrofits, including, but not limited to, retrofitting
52 of existing heating, ventilation or air conditioning systems, and (2)
53 residential improvements that reduce health and safety hazards found
54 in such residential dwellings, including, but not limited to, lead, radon
55 and other contaminants, through removal, remediation and abatement
56 of such health and safety hazards. The energy efficiency retrofits shall
57 be consistent with the guidelines set forth in the Conservation and Load
58 Management Plan submitted by the electric distribution companies, as
59 defined in section 16-1 of the general statutes, in coordination with the
60 gas companies, as defined in said section, to the Energy Conservation
61 Management Board pursuant to section 16-245m of the general statutes.
62 The pilot program shall be funded in accordance with the provisions of
63 subsection (c) of this section and terminate on December 31, 2031.

64 (b) The Commissioner of Housing may contract with nonprofit
65 organizations to employ in-home environmental assessors to perform
66 energy efficiency retrofits and residential improvements that reduce
67 health and safety hazards pursuant to subsection (a) of this section. In
68 order to qualify for employment as an in-home environmental assessor,
69 a person shall (1) for energy efficient retrofits, (A) be certified to perform
70 energy efficiency retrofits by a nationally recognized certifying
71 organization, or (B) have earned a certificate in energy efficiency
72 retrofits, in-home environmental assessments or a related field from an
73 accredited institution of higher education, or (2) for residential
74 improvements that reduce health and safety hazards, (A) be certified to
75 remove, remediate or abate health and safety hazards by a nationally
76 recognized certifying organization, or (B) have earned a certificate in the
77 removal, remediation or abatement of health and safety hazards or a
78 related field from an accredited institution of higher education.

79 (c) In accordance with the provisions of section 8-446 of the general
80 statutes, as amended by this act, beginning on January 1, 2022, the
81 Commissioner of Housing shall expend five hundred thousand dollars

82 annually for the purposes of the pilot program established pursuant to
 83 this section and any related administrative expense. For purposes of this
 84 subsection, "administrative expense" means any administrative or other
 85 cost or expense incurred by the Department of Housing in carrying out
 86 the provisions of this section, including, but not limited to, the hiring of
 87 necessary employees and entering into necessary contracts.

88 (d) Not later than January 1, 2023, and annually thereafter until
 89 December 31, 2031, the Commissioner of Housing shall report, in
 90 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes,
 91 to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having
 92 cognizance of matters relating to housing, energy and technology,
 93 planning and development and the budgets of state agencies regarding
 94 the status of the pilot program established pursuant to subsection (a) of
 95 this section and all moneys expended by the Department of Housing for
 96 the purposes of carrying out the provisions of this section.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2021</i>	8-446
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2021</i>	New section

PH *Joint Favorable*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 22 \$	FY 23 \$
Department of Housing	GF - Cost	250,000	500,000

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill establishes a pilot program to be administered by the Department of Housing (DOH), and results in an annual cost of \$500,000 beginning January 1, 2022 to the Healthy Homes Fund (HHF).¹ The program is anticipated to cost approximately \$250,000 in FY 22 for the partial year. During the nine-year pilot program (the program is scheduled to end on December 31, 2031), DOH must provide energy efficiency retrofits and residential improvements that reduce health and safety hazards for at least 500 residential units per year and spend \$500,000 per year doing so. The bill authorizes DOH to include related administrative expenses in that amount; such costs are anticipated to total \$90,000 per year for salary and fringe benefits for part time staff. There is no cost for DOH to provide the annual report required under the bill.

It is unclear to what extent DOH can provide the retrofits and improvements to 500 homes with approximately \$410,000 in available

¹ The Healthy Homes Fund is a non-lapsing, General Fund account funded through a \$12 surcharge on certain homeowners' insurance policies.

funding, as the average cost may exceed \$820 per home.²

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future until FY 31, with administrative expenses continuing subject to changes in state employee wages and fringe benefits. FY 32 would reflect a half year's costs.

Sources: Department of Housing

² As a reference, the Healthy Homes Initiative, another DOH program that funds some similar residential improvements, permits costs of \$5,000 per unit.

OLR Bill Analysis**HB 6653*****AN ACT CONCERNING HEALTHY HOMES.*****SUMMARY**

This bill requires the Department of Housing (DOH), by January 1, 2022, to establish a pilot program that provides at least 500 residential dwellings with (1) energy efficiency retrofits (e.g., retrofitting existing HVAC systems) and (2) residential improvements that reduce health and safety hazards found in these dwellings, such as the removal, remediation, and abatement of lead, radon, or other contaminants. The program ends on December 31, 2031.

Under the bill, the pilot program is funded through the Healthy Homes Fund (see BACKGROUND). The bill requires the DOH commissioner, beginning on January 1, 2022, and annually after that until the program ends, to spend \$500,000 from the fund for the program and any related administrative expenses. These expenses may include hiring employees and entering into contracts.

The bill also requires the DOH commissioner to report on the pilot program's status and expenditures to the Appropriations, Housing, Energy and Technology, and Planning and Development committees. The commissioner must do this annually starting by January 1, 2023, until the pilot program ends.

Lastly, the bill makes technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2021

PILOT PROGRAM***Purpose***

Under the bill, the pilot program must annually provide at least 500

residential dwellings with:

1. energy efficient retrofits, including retrofitting existing heating, ventilation, or air conditioning systems; and
2. residential improvements that reduce health and safety hazards in these dwellings, including the removal, remediation, and abatement of lead, radon, and other contaminants.

The bill requires energy efficiency retrofits to be consistent with guidelines in the Conservation and Load Management Plan that electric companies, in coordination with gas companies, submit to the Energy Conservation Management Board under existing law.

Contracts and Employees

The bill also authorizes the DOH commissioner to contract with nonprofit organizations to hire in-home environmental assessors to perform the energy efficiency retrofits and residential improvements described above.

To qualify for this employment, an in-home environmental assessor must:

1. for energy efficient retrofits, (a) be certified to perform these retrofits by a nationally recognized certifying organization or (b) have earned a certificate in energy retrofits, in-home environmental assessments, or a related field from an accredited higher education institution, or
2. for residential improvements to reduce health and safety hazards, (a) be certified to remove, remediate, or abate these hazards by a nationally recognized certifying organization or (b) have earned a certificate in the removal, remediation, or abatement of these hazards, or a related field, from an accredited higher education institution.

BACKGROUND

Healthy Homes Fund

By law, the Healthy Homes Fund is a separate nonlapsing General Fund account used to support (1) the Crumbling Foundations Assistance Fund, which assists homeowners with concrete foundations damaged by pyrrhotite (i.e., crumbling foundations); (2) homes with structure subsidence or water damage in New Haven and Woodbridge; and (3) DOH lead removal, remediation, and abatement activities. The fund is capitalized by revenue from an annual \$12 surcharge on certain homeowners' insurance policies.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 31 Nay 2 (03/26/2021)