

OFFICE OF FISCAL ANALYSIS

Legislative Office Building, Room 5200
Hartford, CT 06106 ◊ (860) 240-0200
<http://www.cga.ct.gov/ofa>

HB-5349

AN ACT CONCERNING THE PERFORMANCE OF A POLLEN
COUNT.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 25 \$	FY 26 \$
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection	GF - Cost	300,000 to 1.35 million	75,000 to 225,000
State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits ¹	GF - Potential Cost	32,200	32,200

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill, which requires the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to establish a pollen count program, results in a cost to the state beginning in FY 25. The cost to DEEP is anticipated to range from \$300,000 to approximately \$1.35 million in FY 25 and from \$75,000 to \$225,000 in FY 26 (and annually thereafter). If DEEP hires a person to administer the program, there will be additional fringe benefits costs of \$32,200 annually beginning in FY 25.

The bill's cost will depend on which implementation method DEEP chooses regarding: (1) whether to execute the pollen count within the agency or contract for it (in whole or part), and (2) the number of pollen

¹The fringe benefit costs for most state employees are budgeted centrally in accounts administered by the Comptroller. The estimated active employee fringe benefit cost associated with most personnel changes is 41.25% of payroll in FY 25.

Primary Analyst: JS
Contributing Analyst(s):
Reviewer: MP

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count units, which likely will be either one or three.

If DEEP operates one pollen count unit, the estimated cost is at least \$375,000 in FY 25 (\$300,000 for the unit and \$75,000 in per-unit maintenance), with annual maintenance costs of \$75,000 in FY 26 and thereafter. If instead the department uses three units, then the costs rise to at least \$1,125,000 in FY 25 and \$225,000 in FY 26 and thereafter. These estimates do not include DEEP personnel costs, which may be necessary.

Another option is to contract with a school of medicine as a partner. If this method is selected and only one unit is purchased, then the FY 25 cost is approximately \$300,000, consisting of \$225,000 for equipment and \$75,000 in personnel costs (including training). In FY 26 and beyond, the estimated cost is limited to \$75,000 for personnel.

If, however, DEEP contracts for a pollen count involving three units, then costs increase significantly. According to DEEP, three units is the minimum number to establish a network. In this scenario, the FY 25 cost to DEEP rises to approximately \$1.3 million, consisting of: (1) the contract's estimated cost of \$1,225,000 (inclusive of equipment, personnel, and training); and (2) one new DEEP Air Pollution Control Engineer with salary (\$78,100) and equipment costs (\$16,300) totaling \$94,400. Fringe benefits costs of \$32,200 annually (beginning in FY 25) bring the FY 25 total cost to the state to approximately \$1.35 million. In FY 26 and annually thereafter, the total cost to the state declines to approximately \$190,300, reflecting: (1) contract costs of \$75,000; (2) DEEP personnel costs of \$83,100 for the new position (the same salary and \$5,000 in equipment costs); and (3) the same fringe benefits costs.

While there are less expensive pollen count units available, DEEP indicated that these typically do not meet national standards as required by the bill. DEEP additionally is concerned about data quality for such units.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.