

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 24-13—sHB 5355
Environment Committee

AN ACT CONCERNING THE WATER RESOURCES OF THE UPPER FARMINGTON RIVER VALLEY

SUMMARY: This act requires the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection commissioner to make Colebrook River Lake Dam release and holdback requests to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as needed, to achieve an optimum flow in the Farmington River for fish and wildlife, recreation, river health, flood risk reduction, tourism, hydropower, and safety. The commissioner must consult with the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) when doing this. (Colebrook River Lake Dam is on the Farmington River’s west branch in Colebrook.)

The act also requires MDC to release from the Goodwin Dam any amount of water released from the Colebrook Dam based on the commissioner’s request. This applies regardless of any state statute or special act. (Goodwin Dam is also on the Farmington River’s west branch, just east of Colebrook and downstream from the Colebrook River Lake Dam.)

Lastly, the act requires the commissioner to report to the Environment Committee by January 1, 2025, on recommended ways for the state to manage Colebrook River Lake waters between the levels of 701 and 641 feet if the federal government releases MDC from its responsibility for these waters. The report must address the state’s interest in achieving an optimum flow for fish and wildlife, recreation, river health, flood risk reduction, tourism, hydropower, and safety. The commissioner must consult with relevant stakeholders when preparing the report.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage