



General Assembly

February Session, 2024

Raised Bill No. 5484

LCO No. 2490



Referred to Committee on TRANSPORTATION

Introduced by:
(TRA)

***AN ACT CONCERNING TREE AND VEGETATION MANAGEMENT
GUIDELINES BY THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.***

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

1 Section 1. Section 13b-31h of the 2024 supplement to the general
2 statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof
3 (*Effective from passage*):

4 (a) The Department of Transportation shall develop, and thereafter
5 revise as necessary, guidelines governing tree and vegetation
6 management, removal and replacement along state highways for use by
7 its employees and contractors when undertaking maintenance and
8 construction projects. The goal of the guidelines shall be to ensure the
9 impacts of maintenance and construction projects on the environment,
10 landscape and noise pollution are balanced or outweighed by measures
11 taken to avoid and minimize the impacts.

12 (b) Such guidelines shall include, but need not be limited to,
13 provisions addressing (1) the safety of the traveling public; (2) general
14 roadside vegetation management activities performed by the
15 department, including, but not limited to, mowing, herbicide

16 application, grassing, replanting with native species whenever
17 practicable, limb management, tree removal and debris removal; (3)
18 beautification, enhancements and the effect on scenic roads designated
19 pursuant to section 13b-31c; (4) visibility enhancement; and (5) the
20 environmental impact of such work, including (A) preventing invasive
21 tree, brush or plant species' growth and impact, (B) storm water run-off,
22 (C) erosion, (D) replanting of vegetation species to expand and improve
23 pollinator habitats, as described in section 22-90b, and (E) reduced
24 mowing. Such guidelines shall apply to construction projects financed,
25 in whole or in part, with federal funds to the extent such guidelines do
26 not conflict with federal laws and regulations.

27 (c) Such guidelines shall not apply to the removal of any trees or
28 vegetation necessary to maintain public safety or that is performed
29 because of a weather-related civil preparedness emergency declared
30 pursuant to section 28-9.

31 (d) [On or before January 1, 2024] Not later than thirty days after the
32 effective date of this section, the Commissioner of Transportation shall
33 submit such guidelines to the joint standing committees of the General
34 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to transportation and
35 the environment, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a.
36 [The] Not later than thirty days after the receipt of such guidelines, the
37 committees shall hold a joint public hearing on such guidelines and the
38 commissioner shall present such guidelines at the public hearing. The
39 committees shall meet to approve or reject such guidelines and advise
40 the commissioner of their approval or rejection of such guidelines. If the
41 committees fail to approve or reject such guidelines within thirty days
42 of such receipt, such guidelines shall be deemed approved. Such
43 guidelines shall become effective when approved by an affirmative vote
44 of the committees or deemed approved. If such guidelines are rejected,
45 such guidelines shall be returned to the commissioner for revisions and
46 resubmitted to the committees not later than thirty days after such
47 rejection. Any such resubmitted guidelines shall be acted upon in the
48 same manner as provided in this subsection for the initial submission of
49 guidelines.

50 (e) The Department of Transportation shall not remove any trees or
51 vegetation when undertaking maintenance and construction projects
52 until such guidelines are approved or deemed approved in accordance
53 with the provisions of this section, except the department may remove
54 any trees or vegetation necessary to maintain public safety or because of
55 a weather-related civil preparedness emergency declared pursuant to
56 section 28-9.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	13b-31h

TRA *Joint Favorable*