



House of Representatives

File No. 985

General Assembly

January Session, 2025

(Reprint of File No. 686)

Substitute House Bill No. 7174
As Amended by House Amendment
Schedule "A"

Approved by the Legislative Commissioner
May 30, 2025

AN ACT CONCERNING RIPARIAN AREAS.

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

- 1 Section 1. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a working
- 2 group within the legislative branch to identify where and how
- 3 protection of vegetated riparian buffers in the state can be incorporated
- 4 into statutes and regulations in order to improve the health of and
- 5 protect the resources of the state's watercourses consistent with private
- 6 property rights, to respond to the projected impacts on watercourses
- 7 that are listed in the recommendations of the Governor's Council on
- 8 Climate Change and to meet the goals for the health of Long Island
- 9 Sound,. In undertaking its work, the working group shall: (1) Review
- 10 riparian buffer protection in other states, (2) examine the Department of
- 11 Energy and Environmental Protection's resources that are currently
- 12 dedicated to its Inland Wetland and Watercourses program, (3)
- 13 determine implications of existing case law on the protection of riparian
- 14 buffers, (4) make recommendations to the Department of Energy and

15 Environmental Protection for any changes to inland wetlands and
16 watercourses regulations, identify if and how the further protection of
17 vegetated riparian buffers should be incorporated into statutes and
18 regulations, and make recommendations for attendant legislation.

19 (b) Not later than thirty days after the effective date of this section,
20 the cochairpersons of the joint standing committee of the General
21 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the environment, in
22 consultation with the ranking members of said committee, shall jointly
23 select two cochairpersons for such working group. Not later than forty-
24 five days after the effective date of this section, the cochairpersons of
25 such working group shall select the membership of such working group
26 which shall include, but not be limited to: (1) One representative of the
27 Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the Department
28 of Transportation and the Office of Policy and Management, (2) a
29 representative of homebuilders, (3) two representatives of
30 environmental advocacy organizations working on water-related issues
31 and climate change, (4) a representative of cold water anglers, (5) two
32 representatives of municipal inland wetland commissions, one of whom
33 shall represent a town with a population of more than fifteen thousand,
34 and one of whom shall represent a town with a population of less than
35 fifteen thousand residents, (6) a representative of the Connecticut
36 Chapter of the American Planning Association, (7) one representative
37 from a council of governments, (8) a representative of the water utilities,
38 (9) a representative of an organization that represents the marine trades
39 in the state, (10) a representative of the Connecticut Farm Bureau, or its
40 designee, (11) a certified forester in this state, and (12) a representative
41 of realtors in this state.

42 (c) The cochairpersons of such working group shall convene such
43 working group not later than sixty days after the effective date of this
44 section. The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the
45 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the
46 environment shall serve as administrative staff of the working group.
47 Not later than January 15, 2026, the working group shall submit a report
48 on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing committee of

49 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the
50 environment, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the
51 general statutes. The working group shall terminate on the date that it
52 submits such report or January 15, 2026, whichever is later.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section

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: None

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill establishes a working group to identify where and how protection of vegetated riparian buffers in the state can be incorporated into statutes and regulations to improve the health of and protect the state's watercourses resulting in no fiscal impact to the state because the working group has the expertise to meet the requirements of the amendment.

House "A" strikes the underlying bill and its associated fiscal impact and replaces it with the fiscal impact described above.

The Out Years

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

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OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 7174 (as amended by House "A")

AN ACT CONCERNING RIPARIAN AREAS.

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Research does not analyze Special Acts.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 23 Nay 10 (03/24/2025)

Planning and Development Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 12 Nay 6 (04/25/2025)