



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 378

February Session, 2026

Substitute House Bill No. 5248

House of Representatives, April 2, 2026

The Committee on Energy and Technology reported through REP. STEINBERG of the 136th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND TRANSMISSION PLANNING.

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

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2026*) If the federal Energy Star
2 program is eliminated, the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental
3 Protection, in consultation with the Commissioner of Consumer
4 Protection, may endorse an equivalent voluntary energy efficiency
5 certification program established by a third-party entity. The
6 Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection may coordinate
7 with any other state that endorses such a program to create
8 standardized labels for consumers pursuant to such program.

9 Sec. 2. Subdivisions (2) and (3) of subsection (d) of section 16a-48 of
10 the general statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
11 thereof (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

12 (2) (A) Such efficiency standards, where in conflict with the State

13 Building Code, shall take precedence over the standards contained in
14 the Building Code. [Not later than July 1, 2007, and biennially thereafter,
15 the] The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection shall
16 periodically review and increase the level of such efficiency standards
17 by adopting regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter
18 54, upon [a] the commissioner's determination that increased efficiency
19 standards would [serve to] promote energy conservation in the state
20 and would be cost-effective for consumers who purchase and use such
21 new products. [, provided no] In determining cost-effectiveness for
22 consumers pursuant to this subparagraph, the commissioner may rely
23 on a determination by a multistate appliance standards organization
24 that such new product will have a payback period for the consumer of
25 not greater than five years. No such increased efficiency standards shall
26 become effective within one year following the adoption of any
27 amended regulations providing for such increased efficiency standards.

28 (B) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, when adopting
29 regulations pursuant to this subdivision, the commissioner may
30 incorporate by reference the relevant efficiency standard, including, but
31 not limited to, any definition within said standard that differs from any
32 definition provided in this section, and any associated test standard for
33 the relevant efficiency standard. Such standards may include, but need
34 not be limited to, requirements concerning the ability of a product to
35 interface with any demand response program of a municipal electric
36 utility or an electric distribution company.

37 (3) (A) The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection,
38 in consultation with the Commissioner of Consumer Protection, shall,
39 from time to time, adopt and amend regulations, in accordance with the
40 provisions of chapter 54, to designate additional products, including,
41 but not limited to, plumbing fixtures, to be subject to the provisions of
42 this section and to establish efficiency standards for such products (i)
43 upon a determination that such efficiency standards [(i)] (I) would serve
44 to promote energy or water conservation in the state, [(ii)] (II) would be
45 cost-effective for consumers who purchase and use such new products,
46 and [(iii)] (III) would not impose an unreasonable burden on

47 [Connecticut] businesses in the state, or (ii) if product efficiency
48 standards that were issued or approved for publication by the United
49 States Department of Energy on or before January 1, 2018, pursuant to
50 the Energy Policy and Conservation Act, 42 USC 6201 et seq., were
51 subsequently withdrawn or repealed. In determining cost-effectiveness
52 for consumers pursuant to this subparagraph, the commissioner may
53 rely on a determination by a multistate appliance standards
54 organization that such new product will have a payback period for the
55 consumer of not greater than five years.

56 (B) [The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection, in
57 consultation with the Multi-State Appliance Standards Collaborative,
58 shall identify additional appliance and equipment efficiency standards.
59 The commissioner shall review all California standards and may review
60 standards from other states in such collaborative. The commissioner
61 shall issue notice of such review in the Connecticut Law Journal, allow
62 for public comment and may hold a public hearing within six months of
63 adoption of an efficiency standard by a cooperative member state
64 regarding a product for which no equivalent Connecticut or federal
65 standard currently exists. The commissioner shall adopt regulations in
66 accordance with the provisions of chapter 54 adopting such efficiency
67 standard unless the commissioner makes a specific finding that such
68 standard does not meet the criteria in subparagraph (A) of this
69 subdivision.] When adopting regulations pursuant to this subdivision,
70 the commissioner may incorporate by reference the relevant efficiency
71 standard, including, but not limited to, any definition within such
72 standard that differs from any definition in this section, and any
73 associated test standard for the relevant efficiency standard. Such
74 standards may include, but need not be limited to, requirements
75 concerning the ability of a product to interface with any demand
76 response program of a municipal electric utility or an electric
77 distribution company.

78 (C) Efficiency standards established pursuant to this subdivision,
79 where in conflict with the State Building Code or the efficiency
80 standards for plumbing fixtures adopted pursuant to subsection (a) of

81 section 21a-86a, shall take precedence over the provisions of the State
82 Building Code or such standards adopted pursuant to subsection (a) of
83 section 21a-86a.

84 Sec. 3. Subsection (g) of section 16a-48 of the general statutes is
85 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
86 *1, 2026*):

87 (g) [Manufacturers of any new products set forth in subsection (b) of
88 this section for which (1) no efficiency standards exist in California, and
89 (2) the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection adopts
90 efficiency standards, shall certify to the commissioner that such
91 products are in compliance with the provisions of this section, except
92 that certification is not required for single voltage external AC to DC
93 power supplies and walk-in refrigerators and walk-in freezers. All
94 single voltage external AC to DC power supplies shall be labeled as
95 described in the January 2006 California Code of Regulations, Title 20,
96 Section 1607(9). The commissioner shall promulgate regulations
97 governing the certification of such products.] Manufacturers of
98 products subject to any regulations adopted pursuant to this section
99 shall submit documentation, on a form prescribed by the commissioner,
100 concerning the certification of such products by the California Energy
101 Commission, the federal WaterSense program or a successor program
102 that promotes water efficiency, the federal Energy Star program or a
103 successor program that promotes energy efficiency or a third-party
104 certification body designated by the commissioner, as applicable, for
105 compliance with this section or compliance with identical standards
106 adopted by another jurisdiction. The commissioner shall publish an
107 annual list of [any products set forth in subsection (b) of this section on
108 the department's Internet web site that designates which such products
109 are certified in California and which such products not certified in
110 California have demonstrated compliance with efficiency standards
111 adopted by the commissioner pursuant to subparagraph (B) of
112 subdivision (3) of subsection (d) of this section] such products.

113 Sec. 4. Subsection (h) of section 16a-48 of the general statutes is

114 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
115 *1, 2026*):

116 (h) The commissioner may periodically inspect or cause inspections
117 to be made of, either in person or online, distributors and retailers of
118 products subject to the provisions of this section. The commissioner may
119 establish a process to anonymously report potential violations of this
120 section through the department's Internet web site. The Attorney
121 General may institute proceedings to enforce the provisions of this
122 section. Any person who violates any provision of this section shall be
123 subject to a civil penalty of not more than two hundred fifty dollars.
124 Each violation of this section shall constitute a separate offense, and each
125 day that such violation continues shall constitute a separate offense.

126 Sec. 5. Subdivision (3) of subsection (c) of section 16-50p of the general
127 statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof
128 (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

129 (3) For purposes of this section, a public benefit exists when a facility
130 is necessary for the reliability of the electric power supply of the state or
131 for the development of a competitive market for electricity and a public
132 need exists when a facility is necessary for the reliability of the electric
133 power supply of the state. In determining that a public need exists
134 pursuant to this subdivision, the council shall consider whether a facility
135 described in subdivision (1) or (4) of subsection (a) of section 16-50i
136 addresses anticipated future electric grid reliability needs by creating an
137 interconnection point for a future electric generation source or by
138 relieving any transmission system constraint to allow for the
139 unconstrained delivery of electricity from a future generation source.
140 Any future reliability needs identified in the council's determination of
141 public need, and any potential solutions to address such reliability
142 needs, shall be supported by (A) any study or finding of the regional
143 independent system operator, as defined in section 16-1, or (B) the
144 Integrated Resources Plan approved pursuant to section 16a-3a.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	October 1, 2026	New section
Sec. 2	October 1, 2026	16a-48(d)(2) and (3)
Sec. 3	October 1, 2026	16a-48(g)
Sec. 4	October 1, 2026	16a-48(h)
Sec. 5	October 1, 2026	16-50p(c)(3)

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Section 2(d)(3)(B), "said" was changed to "such" for accuracy.

ET *Joint Favorable Subst. -LCO*

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

This bill expands the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's (DEEP) authority to establish energy efficiency standards, which does not result in a cost to the state as DEEP has the staff and expertise necessary to meet the requirements of the bill.

Additionally, the bill requires the Siting Council, when determining whether a public need exists for transmission lines, substations, and switchyards, to consider if the project addresses anticipated future electric grid reliability needs. This does not result in a cost to the state as the Siting Council has the staff and expertise necessary to make these determinations.

Rate Payer Impact

Appliance regulations under consideration in Sections 2-5 would be expected to save Connecticut residents over 6.6 million¹ megawatt-hours of electricity through 2050, resulting in significant savings to rate payers who take advantage of the efficiency standards.

Planned transmission projects can lower the costs to rate payers by reducing the risk of unknown or unexpectedly high upgrade costs by eliminating transmission congestion and eliminating barriers to various

¹ Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

new projects.

It is anticipated that requiring the Siting Council to determine whether a public need exists for transmission lines and to consider if the project addresses anticipated future electric grid reliability needs, could yield savings to rate payers. The extent of the savings will be dependent upon the specific project and various electric distribution company decisions, that are outside the immediate scope of the bill.

The Out Years

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5248

AN ACT CONCERNING ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND TRANSMISSION PLANNING.

SUMMARY

This bill expands the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection’s (DEEP) authority to establish energy efficiency standards for new products and makes related changes to the process for setting these standards. The bill also allows the department to endorse a third-party voluntary energy efficiency certification program if the federal Energy Star program is eliminated.

Separately, the bill adds to the factors the Siting Council must consider when determining whether a public need exists for certain transmission facilities subject the council’s jurisdiction (electric transmission lines, electric substations, or switchyards). Specifically, the bill requires the council to consider whether the project addresses anticipated future electric grid reliability needs.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§ 1 — ENERGY STAR REPLACEMENT

If the federal Energy Star program is eliminated, the bill authorizes the DEEP commissioner, in consultation with the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) commissioner, to endorse an equivalent voluntary energy efficiency certification program established by a third party. The bill allows the DEEP commissioner to coordinate with any other state that endorses a program to create standardized labels for consumers.

The federal Energy Star program is a voluntary labeling program for energy-efficient products, homes, buildings, and manufacturing plants

that is managed jointly by the federal Environmental Protection Agency and the federal Department of Energy (DOE) (42 U.S.C. § 6294a).

§§ 2-4 — NEW PRODUCT ENERGY EFFICIENCY STANDARDS

Statutory Products and Standards

Existing law requires DEEP to adopt regulations to establish minimum energy efficiency standards for various products (for example, commercial refrigerators and freezers, boilers, and residential pool pumps). The law, which applies to new products sold, offered for sale, or installed in the state, defines the products and specifies their standards.

Current law requires the DEEP commissioner to review these standards biennially and increase them through regulations if she determines that it would promote energy conservation and be cost-effective for consumers. The bill allows the DEEP commissioner, when determining a standard's cost-effectiveness, to rely on a multi-state appliance standard organization's determination that the new product will have a payback period of no more than five years. It also requires her to do this review periodically, rather than biennially.

Designating Standards for Additional Products

Current law requires the DEEP commissioner to adopt regulations designating efficiency standards for additional products, if she determines the standards would (1) promote energy conservation in the state, (2) be cost effective for consumers, and (3) not impose an unreasonable burden on businesses in the state.

The bill allows her to approve standards that promote water conservation in the state, in addition to being cost effective and not imposing an unreasonable burden on businesses. It allows her to determine consumer cost effectiveness by using a multi-state appliance standards organization's determination that the new product will have a payback period of no more than five years.

The bill also requires her to consult with the DCP commissioner when designating additional products through regulations. It specifies that

the requirement to designate additional products is ongoing, requiring DEEP to adopt and amend regulations from time to time, and that additional products may include plumbing fixtures.

The bill additionally requires the DEEP commissioner, in consultation with the DCP commissioner, to adopt and amend regulations to establish efficiency standards for additional products if product efficiency standards issued or approved for publication by DOE by January 1, 2018, under the Energy Policy and Conservation Act were subsequently withdrawn or repealed.

The bill eliminates a separate process for DEEP to identify additional appliance and equipment efficiency standards. Under current law, this process requires the DEEP commissioner to adopt standards under certain circumstances if a state belonging to the Multi-State Appliance Standards Collaborative adopts an efficiency standard for a product that does not have a federal standard or a state standard in Connecticut.

Definitions, Test Standards, and Demand Response Programs

The bill allows the DEEP commissioner, when adopting regulations for products listed in statute or additional products, to incorporate by reference relevant efficiency standards, including standards with definitions that differ from those set in statute and any associated test standard for the relevant efficiency standard. These standards may require a product to interface with an electric utility's demand response program.

Conflicts With Other Standards

By law, standards established for products listed in statute, when in conflict with the State Building Code, take precedence. The bill similarly requires standards the DEEP commissioner sets for additional products to take precedence when in conflict with the State Building Code. It also requires additional product standards to take precedence over DCP regulations establishing minimum efficiency standards for plumbing fixtures and other water-using devices.

Compliance Documentation

With certain exceptions, current law requires new product manufacturers to certify to DEEP that their products are compliant if (1) the product is listed in statute, (2) no efficiency standards exist for the product in California, and (3) the DEEP commissioner adopts standards for the product. It also requires the DEEP commissioner to adopt regulations governing the products' certification.

The bill eliminates these requirements, instead requiring manufacturers of products subject to any DEEP regulations on efficiency standards to submit documentation on a product's certification by:

1. the California Energy Commission,
2. the federal WaterSense program or a successor program that promotes water efficiency,
3. the federal Energy Star program or a successor program that promotes energy efficiency, or
4. a third-party certification body designated by the DEEP commissioner.

Alternatively, manufacturers may submit documentation on compliance with identical standards adopted by another jurisdiction.

The bill requires the DEEP commissioner to annually publish a list of the products that must have this certification.

Investigation and Enforcement

Existing law, unchanged by the bill, allows the attorney general to enforce laws about energy efficiency product standards and subjects violators to a civil penalty of up to \$250. The bill allows the DEEP commissioner to (1) periodically inspect or have inspections done of product distributors and retailers in person or online and (2) establish a process to anonymously report violations through DEEP's website.

§ 5 — TRANSMISSION PROJECT DECISIONS

By law, developers must get a certificate of environmental compatibility and public need (“a certificate”) before starting projects to build or modify certain facilities that are subject to the Siting Council’s jurisdiction, including transmission lines, electric substations, and switchyards. Existing law prohibits the council from granting a certificate unless it makes certain findings about the project, including that there is a public need for the facility and the basis of that need. A public need exists when a facility is necessary for the reliability of the state’s electric power supply.

The bill requires the council, when determining whether a public need exists for transmission lines, substations, and switchyards, to consider whether the project addresses anticipated future electric grid reliability needs by (1) creating an interconnection point for a future electric generation source or (2) relieving a transmission system constraint to allow for the unconstrained delivery of electricity from a future generation source. Any future reliability needs identified in the council’s determination and any potential solutions to address them must be supported by (1) an ISO-New England study or finding or (1) the state’s Integrated Resources Plan.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Energy and Technology Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 18 Nay 8 (03/17/2026)