



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 191

February Session, 2026

Substitute House Bill No. 5330

House of Representatives, March 26, 2026

The Committee on Environment reported through REP. PARKER of the 101st Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN WILDLIFE ACTION PLANS.

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

1 Section 1. Subsection (b) of section 26-107f of the general statutes is
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
3 *1, 2026*):

4 (b) The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection shall
5 establish a conservation program for species not traditionally harvested,
6 which shall include, but not be limited to, provisions for the following:
7 [Resource] Facilitation of the implementation of the most recent
8 federally approved state of Connecticut wildlife action plan, resource
9 inventory, including conservation action tracker measures, habitat
10 conservation, monitoring of environmental and climate change impacts,
11 conservation of endangered and threatened species, wildlife recreation
12 management, wildlife conservation education, private landowner
13 assistance, urban wildlife conservation, problem animal management
14 and scientific research, planning, administration and development.
15 Such conservation program shall provide for a wildlife veterinarian to
16 assist in the oversight and implementation of such conservation

17 program.

18 Sec. 2. Section 26-107h of the general statutes is repealed and the
19 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

20 [On or before February first, annually, the Commissioner of Energy
21 and Environmental Protection shall submit to the joint standing
22 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
23 relating to the environment a report on the progress of the program
24 established under section 26-107f, the purposes for which any funds
25 allocated to said program were expended and the future of the
26 program.]

27 (a) There is established a working group within the legislature to
28 identify how the conservation program established in section 26-107f, as
29 amended by this act, should be funded and implemented.

30 (b) Not later than thirty days after the effective date of this section,
31 the cochairpersons of the joint standing committee of the General
32 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the environment, in
33 consultation with the ranking members of said committee, and the chief
34 of the Bureau of Natural Resources of the Department of Energy and
35 Environmental Protection shall jointly select two cochairpersons for
36 such working group. Not later than forty-five days after the effective
37 date of this section, the cochairpersons of such working group shall
38 select the membership of such working group, which shall include, but
39 not be limited to: (1) One representative of the Department of Energy
40 and Environmental Protection, the Department of Transportation and
41 the Office of Policy and Management, (2) two representatives of
42 conservation advocacy organizations that work on wildlife-related
43 issues, one of whom shall have fisheries aquatic expertise, (3) one
44 representative of a land conservation organization, (4) two members of
45 the faculty of a state college or university, as recommended by the chief
46 of the Bureau of Natural Resources of the Department of Energy and
47 Environmental Protection, (5) one representative from a council of
48 governments, (6) a representative of the water utilities, (7) a
49 representative of an organization that represents the marine trades in

50 the state, (8) a representative of the Connecticut Farm Bureau, or its
51 designee, and (9) a certified forester in this state.

52 (c) The cochairpersons of such working group shall convene such
53 working group not later than sixty days after the effective date of this
54 section. The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the
55 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the
56 environment shall serve as administrative staff of the working group.
57 Not later than January 15, 2027, the working group shall submit a report
58 on its findings and recommendations, including any proposed
59 legislative proposals, to the joint standing committee of the General
60 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the environment, in
61 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a. The working group
62 shall terminate on the date that it submits such report or January 15,
63 2027, whichever is later.

64 Sec. 3. Section 26-107i of the general statutes is repealed and the
65 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

66 The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection may
67 establish a program for the sale of wildlife stamps, prints, posters,
68 calendars, publications or other items. Any revenue received from the
69 sale of such goods or materials and any funds donated to the state for
70 the purpose of the program established under section 26-107f, as
71 amended by this act, shall be deposited in the General Fund and
72 allocated to the program established under section 26-107f, as amended
73 by this act.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2026</i>	26-107f(b)
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2026</i>	26-107h
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2026</i>	26-107i

ENV Joint Favorable Subst.

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:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 27 \$	FY 28 \$
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection	GF - Cost	133,960	133,960
State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits ¹	GF - Cost	56,022	56,022

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill makes various changes to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's (DEEP) non-harvested species wildlife diversity program.

Section 1 results in a cost to the state of \$189,982, beginning in FY 27, associated with hiring a wildlife veterinarian to assist in overseeing the wildlife program, which is an expanded requirement of the bill. The cost includes an annual salary of \$133,960 and corresponding fringe benefits of \$56,022.

Section 2 establishes the non-harvested species conservation program working group and does not result in a fiscal impact as DEEP has the expertise necessary to staff the working group.

Section 3 clarifies how donations to the non-harvested program must be deposited and allocated and does not result in a fiscal impact.

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 41.82% of payroll in FY 27.

The Out Years

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

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 5330*****AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN WILDLIFE ACTION PLANS.*****SUMMARY**

This bill expands the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's (DEEP) traditionally nonharvested species conservation program by requiring the program to (1) implement the state's most recent federally approved wildlife action plan (see BACKGROUND), (2) include conservation action tracker measures in the resource inventory conducted under the program, and (3) monitor climate change impacts. The bill also requires the program to include a wildlife veterinarian to assist in its oversight and implementation.

The bill eliminates a requirement for the DEEP commissioner to annually report to the Environment Committee on the conservation program and instead creates a working group to determine how the program should be funded and implemented.

Lastly, the bill requires any money donated to the state for the conservation program to be deposited into the General Fund and allocated to the program, as is required under existing law for any revenue from DEEP's program to sell wildlife stamps and other artwork or publications.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

TRADITIONALLY NONHARVESTED SPECIES CONSERVATION PROGRAM WORKING GROUP

The bill requires the Environment Committee's cochairpersons, in consultation with the committee's ranking members and DEEP's Bureau of Natural Resources chief, to jointly select, by October 31, 2026, two cochairpersons for the conservation program working group.

By November 15, 2026, the working group's cochairpersons must select the group's members, which must include at least the following 13 people:

1. one representative each from DEEP, the Department of Transportation, and the Office of Policy and Management;
2. two representatives of conservation advocacy organizations that work on wildlife-related issues, one of whom must have fisheries aquatic expertise;
3. one representative of a land conservation organization;
4. two state college or university faculty members, as recommended by DEEP's Bureau of Natural Resources chief;
5. one representative from a council of governments;
6. one water utilities representative;
7. one representative of an organization representing Connecticut marine trades;
8. one representative of the Connecticut Farm Bureau or its designee; and
9. one Connecticut-certified forester.

The bill requires the working group's cochairpersons to hold the group's first meeting by November 30, 2026, and the group must report its findings and recommendations, including any proposals for legislation, to the Environment Committee by January 15, 2027. The group ends on this date or when it submits its report, whichever is later. Under the bill, the Environment Committee's administrative staff must serve in that capacity for the working group.

BACKGROUND

Wildlife Action Plan

States must submit wildlife action plans to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Service in order to receive certain federal grant funding for wildlife programs. States must review and revise these plans every 10 years and submit them for federal approval. Connecticut's most recent wildlife action plan was approved in 2025 and, among other things, identifies species and habitats in need of conservation and priority conservation issues and actions for the next 10 years.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 34 Nay 0 (03/13/2026)