

Public Health Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5518 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH'S
RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING VARIOUS REVISIONS TO THE

Title: ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND DRINKING WATER STATUTES.

Vote Date: 3/23/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/13/2026

File No.: 543

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Public Health Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

HB 5518 proposes to improve the effectiveness of current law by responding to changes in process or technology regarding environmental and drinking water statutes. HB 5518 makes various changes to the Department of Public Health's (DPH) oversight of bottled water and water sources, to DPH's oversight of environmental laboratories, and to laws regarding asbestos professionals. HB 5518 also exempts crematories that perform only alkaline hydrolysis at funeral homes from the regulations related to proximity to residential property and allows DPH to adopt regulations and processes for alkaline hydrolysis and other cremation processes.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Manisha Juthani, MD, Commissioner, DPH:

Sections 1 through 6 focus on bottled water. These provisions clarify DPH's authority and set standards governing the testing of a bottled water source that better aligns with how the department tests drinking water. These changes will help the department ensure that this water lacks dangerous chemicals, such as PFAS, and is safe for consumers to consume. Section 7 focuses on Environmental Laboratories, which provide testing for water, building materials, soil, solid waste, and sewage. This section clarifies terms and definitions and allows DPH to regulate out-of-state environmental laboratories that are operating service centers in our state, as the number of these centers are on the rise with no oversight by the state.

PA 24-68 did not address existing statutes that prohibited crematoriums within 500 feet of a residential area, creating a conflict since most funeral homes are within that limit. These sections clarify that the 500-foot limit only applies to cremation by incineration and allows for the adoption of regulations for clarification.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Jonathan L. Green, President & Legislative Chair, Connecticut Funeral Directors Association, Inc.:

HB 5518 represents thoughtful updates to Connecticut law governing crematories and emerging forms of final disposition. It is essential that state law provide clear standards that protect public confidence while allowing licensed professionals to responsibly serve the needs of the public. Sections 17(a) and 18 provide important technical corrections to previously adopted statutory language governing the location of crematories. The location requirements applicable to flame-based crematories were inadvertently applied to alkaline hydrolysis facilities as well. HB 5518 corrects that oversight. Section 17(e) provides the DPH with clear authority to establish technical standards governing alkaline hydrolysis and other emerging cremation technologies. As new methods of final disposition continue to develop, it is important that the state retain the flexibility to implement appropriate regulatory standards to ensure public health, environmental protection, and professional accountability.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Elizabeth Gara, Executive Director, Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA):

Section 3 of HB-5518 gives the State Department of Public Health (DPH) broad latitude to set action levels for per- and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) and other unregulated contaminants in bottled water. In the last few years, DPH has increasingly relied on the use of “policies and procedures” to enact a wide range of regulatory changes. However, given the complexity and potential impact and costs associated with setting action levels for PFAS and other unregulated contaminants, CWWA does not believe it is appropriate to permit such changes to be adopted outside of the formal Uniform Administrative Procedure Act (UAPA) process or other formal process that provide opportunities for stakeholder input. Although the bill, as drafted, is intended to be limited to bottled water, CWWA is concerned that this same process will be relied on to set or revise action levels for drinking water supplies. CWWA is concerned that HB-5518 establishes a precedent that would allow the state to revise its action levels or set Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) using “policies and procedures”, that would undermine or confuse ongoing efforts to comply with state and federal requirements relative to PFAS. In addition, it is uncertain how the provisions in the bill overlap or conflict with the responsibilities of a certified operator or employee under the certified operator’s charge.

OTHERS IN OPPOSITION TO HB 5518

- Linda Dalessio, MD.

Reported by: Dave Rackliffe, Asst. Clerk

Date: March 26, 2025