

Environment Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5522 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING THE SEWAGE RIGHT-TO-KNOW ACT.

Vote Date: 3/18/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/13/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Environment Committee

CO-SPONSERS:

Rep. Aundre Bumgardner, 41st Dist.

Rep. Geraldo C. Reyes, 75th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

The proposed bill would revise section 22a-424a of the general statutes to require several changes to the current practice of public notification about sewage spills, which would significantly impact both municipal wastewater treatment plant operators and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

Substitute language strengthens Connecticut's sewage spill reporting and public notification system by requiring rapid electronic reporting, real-time public alerts, and expanded communication to officials and communities when spills occur. It also mandates greater transparency through online data, annual reports, and a study on coordination during private well contamination events.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Katie Dykes, Commissioner, CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protections

DEEP supports transparency and the public's right to be aware of sewage releases. The Department has invested a significant amount of effort in developing and maintaining a Sewage Right-to-Know (SRTK) electronic reporting platform with live maps of Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) and Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO) incidents found on the CT DEEP Performance Dashboard webpage. At the same time, municipalities have invested in developing their own procedures for reporting spills to DEEP SRTK and DEEP's Emergency

Spills dispatch operator. The purpose of the bill to require DEEP to implement real-time public notification system which the public may sign up to receive alerts directly to their phones. This is already being done by the department. Recently, DEEP has entered a contract with Everbridge, the state's 211 system to send real time notifications to residents. It should be noted that the Department is using existing resources to contract with Everbridge. However, mandatory, ongoing operation of this new system will limit the Department's flexibility to deploy resources as they're available. If these enhanced requirements are mandated, the Department will require additional resources not included in the Governor's budget to support the required maintenance of the system. The Department welcomes the opportunity to work with the Committee further about its concerns outlined herein, including staff needs for this program to operate a mandated real-time reporting system, adjusting the annual report due date to later in the year, and other implementation challenges that would arise if this proposal were to move forward as currently drafted. Furthermore, the department thinks it critical to include municipal Water Pollution Control Authorities in this discussion.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Alicea Charamut, Executive Director, Rivers Alliance of Connecticut

Rivers Alliance of Connecticut supports this bill because when sewage enters into CT waterways, it becomes a public health hazard and the public deserves to know about it. In past instances, people have continued to recreate in the contaminated water because they did not know there was a spill. This bill represents the logical next step in updating the system. It would provide an automated electronic notification system that would quickly alert the public.

Representative Jaime S. Foster, PhD, R.D., State of Connecticut, 57th District

Representative Foster supports this bill because many residents rely on private wells for drinking water, which do not have the same monitoring and reporting protections. Often, these residents have no idea that contamination has happened until they discover it themselves. Representative Foster requests that this bill be strengthened to direct DEEP to implement clear community canvassing protocol when multiple nearby properties report contamination. See testimony for list of recommended language additions.

William Lucey, Long Island Soundkeeper, Save the Sound

Save the Sound supports this bill because this bill would be the third update that addresses the final need to inform the public through an automated electronic notification system. New York as implemented something similar and has been very successful. The citizen of CT deserve to know when the water quality is unsafe for recreational activity.

21 Citizens Also Expressed Support

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Brendan Fox, The Metropolitan District (MDC)

The Metropolitan District opposes this bill because they believe the bill may have several unintended consequences. Specifically, the MDC respectfully submits that the modifications proposed in Lines 47 and 48 create unnecessary redundancy and, therefore, are not necessary. The current bypass reporting practice of the MDC, as dictated by the current Right to Know law as well as the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)

permit the MDC operates pursuant to, is to report bypasses to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (“DEEP”), which then posts this information on its publicly facing website. In addition, as required by law, the MDC emails a notice to any downstream municipal official. Requiring this information to be published on the operator’s website is duplicative and is less efficient than the posting on the DEEP site as well as the email transmitted to the local officials. Requiring posting on something other than a single, centralized website (which is the DEEP website) will result in confusion and may have the opposite desired effect. Lines 65 through 69 may also have unintended consequences. For example, if a sewer collapses and it affects private property, they would not be able to place a sign on the property without the homeowner’s permission. By the time this happens, the leak would be over.

Jeff LeMay, Connecticut Water and Environment Association (CTWEA)

CTWEA opposes this bill because they believe there is already extensive notification to the public when a sewage leak happens. CTWEA is also worried that the bill’s proposed requirement to deploy physical signage at locations of sewage releases would create significant implementation challenges without meaningfully improving public awareness. Creating and implementing these signs would take time and effort away from fixing the problem of the leak.

4 Citizens Also Expressed Opposition

Reported by: Henry Russell

Date: 03/26/2026