
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)