

NITROGEN & ENVIRONMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

PA 25-97 established the Sewage Disposal Working Group to assess and provide recommendations regarding regulatory requirements concerning sewage disposal, including, but not limited to, nitrogen discharge limits and their impact on the development of housing, public health and the environment, and balancing the costs associated with the development of housing and a risk-based approach to protecting public health and the environment. The Nitrogen & Environment Subcommittee was established by the Sewage Disposal Working Group to review the proposed DPH regulations and to make recommendations as it pertains to the regulation of nitrogen in Connecticut waters.

The following is a list of consensus items derived from the subcommittee's work and possible recommendations:

Consensus #1:

There was broad agreement that Connecticut lacks sufficiently complete, standardized, and accessible empirical data on septic system performance, particularly nitrogen loading outcomes—to support regulatory changes with scientific confidence.

Possible Recommendations:

1. Provide the necessary funding to adopt wastewater treatment system electronic performance tracking software on all DEEP subsurface and surface discharges, DPH administered systems and local health department systems. This software platform should provide at a minimum all of the features of the software platform that has proven successful in Barnstable County M.A., including transparent and real-time public access to the data. This data tracking and analysis software shall provide the basis for use and approval of wastewater treatment technologies, including advanced or alternative technologies, in the state and for any nitrogen modeling that is used to set any regulations, policy or practice.

Consensus #2:

There was broad consensus that municipalities, DEEP and DPH are understaffed and under resourced to properly regulate systems under their current authority, in addition to future advanced or alternative treatment system regulatory authority.

Possible Recommendations:

1. Additional DEEP & DPH Funding dedicated to:
 - a. Onsite wastewater septic system staffing with goal of improving project turnaround time
 - b. Data collection needed to scientifically develop regulations
 - c. Including funding for education and training for local health districts and the establishment of continuing education and certification for sanitarians, designers and installers.

Consensus #3:

There was agreement that the term “Environmental Sensitive Areas” in proposed DPH regulations would be replaced with the term, “Nitrogen Sensitive Areas”.

Consensus #4:

There was agreement that outside of Nitrogen Sensitive Areas, Nitrogen Assessments would begin with systems that are 7500 gallons or larger.

Additional topics to consider based on discussions had at the 12/29/2025 meeting:

1. Streamlined 50ft(?) setback from wetlands (Make the setback a maximum and shift burden to towns to prove why an expansion is necessary)
2. Consider synergizing DPH Technical Standards with DEEP guidelines, policies and practices regarding the following design considerations:
 - a. Interface factor of stone
 - b. SoilAir
 - c. Wood nitrogen removal systems
 - d. Naturally occurring soils requirement.