



General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 5218

February Session, 2024



**AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RIPARIAN
BUFFERS AND REVISION OF CERTAIN INLAND WETLANDS
PROVISIONS.**

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

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) Notwithstanding any
2 provision of the general statutes, the Department of Energy and
3 Environmental Protection may utilize funds available for stormwater
4 infrastructure for the purpose of acquiring conservation easements
5 located along streams and rivers in the state provided any such
6 conservation easement requires the property owner to maintain a buffer
7 along such stream or river in a vegetated condition. The Commissioner
8 of Energy and Environmental Protection may determine the percentage
9 of such funds to be utilized for the purposes described in this section.
10 For purposes of this section, "vegetated condition" means the retention
11 of native trees, shrubs and herbaceous cover in lieu of lawn, golf courses
12 and athletic fields.

13 (b) The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection shall
14 develop mandatory setbacks for development near streams, rivers and
15 inland wetlands in the state. Not later than January 1, 2025, said
16 department shall submit such proposed setbacks, in accordance with
17 section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committee of

18 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the
19 environment.

20 Sec. 2. Subsections (l) and (m) of section 22a-39 of the general statutes
21 are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective*
22 *October 1, 2024*):

23 (l) Develop a comprehensive training program for inland wetlands
24 agency members. Not later than June 1, 2025, the commissioner shall
25 update such comprehensive training program to include all statutory
26 changes applicable to such inland wetland agencies and any common
27 law developments applicable to the considerations and authority of
28 such agencies. The commissioner shall concomitantly submit a copy of
29 such updated comprehensive training program to the joint standing
30 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
31 relating to the environment;

32 (m) Adopt regulations in accordance with the provisions of chapter
33 54 establishing reporting requirements for inland wetlands agencies,
34 which shall include provisions for reports to the commissioner on
35 permits, orders and other actions of such agencies and development of
36 a form for such reports. Such reports shall include, but not be limited to,
37 a statement from each inland wetlands agency that confirms that each
38 member of such agency completed the training required pursuant to
39 section 22a-42, as amended by this act; and

40 Sec. 3. Subsection (d) of section 22a-42 of the general statutes is
41 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
42 *1, 2024*):

43 (d) [At least one] (1) Each member of the inland wetlands agency [or]
44 and staff of the agency shall be a person who has completed the
45 comprehensive training program developed by the commissioner
46 pursuant to section 22a-39, as amended by this act. The commissioner
47 shall make such training program available online. Any existing
48 member of the inland wetlands agency and staff of the agency shall

