



General Assembly

February Session, 2024

**Raised Bill No. 5229**

LCO No. 1574



Referred to Committee on ENVIRONMENT

Introduced by:  
(ENV)

***AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE  
EELGRASS WORKING GROUP.***

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

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Not later than January 1,  
2 2025, the members of the eelgrass working group, as constituted  
3 pursuant to special act 23-7, shall reconvene to review the output of the  
4 Eelgrass Collaborative related to permitting and policies surrounding  
5 restoration of eelgrass in the state and review the attendant report  
6 generated by the Eelgrass Collaborative. The working group shall  
7 review the existing regulations under the United States Corps of  
8 Engineers permits to evaluate any potential future modifications and  
9 the need for similar modifications of the Department of Energy and  
10 Environmental Protection's and the Department of Agriculture's Bureau  
11 of Aquaculture's policies.

12 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) The Department of Energy and  
13 Environmental Protection, in collaboration with the Department of  
14 Agriculture's Bureau of Aquaculture and The University of Connecticut,  
15 shall identify an individual to serve as the Connecticut Seagrass

16 Coordinator. Such coordinator shall oversee and interact with  
17 stakeholders associated with eelgrass in Connecticut, Long Island  
18 Sound and the broader eelgrass community. The coordinator shall: (1)  
19 Work with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to  
20 develop policies and strategies for the sustainable harvesting of eelgrass  
21 seeds from existing Connecticut eelgrass beds in order to utilize such  
22 seeds in eelgrass bed restoration projects, (2) research, review and  
23 compile best management practices for conducting aquaculture in close  
24 proximity to eelgrass beds; (3) prescribe eelgrass-friendly mooring  
25 systems in mooring fields with a high potential to host eelgrass, as  
26 predicted by the Eelgrass Habitat Suitability Index model and identify  
27 necessary attendant public awareness campaigns for use of such  
28 mooring systems; and (4) establish an appropriate set of metrics for the  
29 evaluation of any restoration efforts made by the state to yield a  
30 reasonable return on investment for such projects over the requisite  
31 period of time for any such project.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	New section

**Statement of Purpose:**

To implement certain of the recommendations of the eelgrass working group that are intended to assist in the preservation and restoration of eelgrass in the state.

*[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]*