House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 393

January Session, 2025

House Bill No. 6250

House of Representatives, April 1, 2025

The Committee on Environment reported through REP. PARKER of the 101st Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING THE LEVELS OF STAFFING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION OFFICERS.

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

Section 1. Section 26-5 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection shall appoint such number of conservation officers as may be necessary for the efficient execution of the duties of the department under section 26-6, provided the commissioner shall receive and consider a recommendation for such number of appointments, not less than once every two years, from the Connecticut Conservation Officers Association. Such recommendation shall be: (1) Based on a review of the duties established in section 26-6 and any enhancement of such duties since the issuance of the most recent such recommendation, and (2) submitted by the commissioner to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the environment. The commissioner may supplement the regular

conservation officer force by appointing as special conservation officer any employee of the department or any sworn federal law enforcement officer of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service or National Marine Fisheries Service, provided such federal officer shall not be considered an employee of the state and may only exercise such officer's authority pursuant to section 26-6 when working with a full-time conservation officer. The commissioner may also appoint any lake patrolman as a special conservation officer solely for the purpose of enforcing boating laws within such patrolman's jurisdiction, provided such patrolman shall not be considered an employee of the state, and further provided that such patrolman has completed a police training course at a Police Officer Standards and Training Council approved training academy. Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, no such lake patrolman shall carry a firearm while in the performance of such patrolman's duties as a special conservation officer unless the board of selectmen of the town or towns in which the lake on which the lake patrolman serves is located approves such carrying of a firearm, or in the case of any town having no board of selectmen, the lake patrolman obtains the approval of the legislative body of such town or towns in which the lake is located. Each conservation officer shall be certified by the Police Officer Standards and Training Council in accordance with the provisions of section 7-294d not later than one year after appointment. Each special conservation officer shall be certified by the Police Officer Standards and Training Council in accordance with the provisions of section 7-294d or complete an equivalent course approved by the Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection. Special conservation officers who are employees of the department shall be entitled to the same benefits to which conservation officers are entitled under the provisions of section 5-142, and such an appointment shall be deemed not to be in conflict with any of the provisions of chapter 67. In addition to their salaries, conservation officers and special conservation officers who are employees of the department shall be reimbursed for all expenses incurred in performance of official duty.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	*from passage*	26-5

ENV *Joint Favorable*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

There is no fiscal impact for the Commissioner of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to receive and consider conservation officer staffing recommendations from the Connecticut Conservation Officers Association, as it is procedural in nature.

The Out Years

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

OLR Bill Analysis

HB 6250

AN ACT CONCERNING THE LEVELS OF STAFFING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION OFFICERS.

SUMMARY

By law, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner must appoint conservation officers as needed to efficiently enforce the state's environmental laws and regulations.

This bill requires the commissioner to receive and consider conservation officer staffing recommendations from the Connecticut Conservation Officers Association at least once every two years. The association must base its recommendations on a review of conservation officers' statutory duties, including any increased duties since the last recommendation was made.

The bill also requires the DEEP commissioner to submit the association's recommendations to the Environment Committee.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

BACKGROUND

Related Bill

HB 7198, favorably reported by the Public Safety and Security Committee, requires the DEEP and emergency services and public protection commissioners to (1) study how to improve the assignment of conservation officers throughout the state and (2) report to the Environment and Public Safety and Security committees by January 1, 2026.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 33 Nay 0 (03/14/2025)