General Assembly

Committee Bill No. 6250

January Session, 2025

LCO No. **4868**

Referred to Committee on ENVIRONMENT

Introduced by:
(ENV)

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 Section 26-5 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):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