



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 544

February Session, 2026

Substitute House Bill No. 5519

House of Representatives, April 9, 2026

The Committee on Public Health reported through REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY of the 133rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

***AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH'S
RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING ON-SITE WASTEWATER
SPECIALISTS AND WATER OPERATOR APPRENTICES.***

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

- 1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) As used in this section:
- 2 (1) "Agent of the local director of health" means a person who holds
3 an approval to investigate, inspect and approve plans relating to
4 subsurface sewage disposal systems pursuant to section 19-13-B103e of
5 the regulations of Connecticut state agencies;
- 6 (2) "Central subsurface sewage disposal system" or "central system"
7 means a subsurface sewage disposal system serving (A) a residential
8 building and one or more outbuildings, (B) a residential building and
9 one or more nonresidential buildings, (C) two or more nonresidential
10 buildings, or (D) two or more outbuildings;
- 11 (3) "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Public Health;

12 (4) "Department" means the Department of Public Health;

13 (5) "Local director of health" means a director of a (A) municipal
14 health department, appointed pursuant to section 19a-200 of the general
15 statutes, or (B) district health department, appointed pursuant to section
16 19a-242 of the general statutes;

17 (6) "On-site wastewater specialist" means a person who has obtained
18 certification from the commissioner to (A) review and approve plans,
19 (B) conduct regulatory inspections, (C) investigate complaints relating
20 to subsurface sewage disposal systems within the jurisdiction of a local
21 director of health, and (D) perform any other related duties as
22 prescribed by the commissioner;

23 (7) "Phase I on-site wastewater specialist" means an on-site
24 wastewater specialist certified by the commissioner to act as an on-site
25 wastewater specialist for a subsurface sewage disposal system serving
26 a building with a design flow of less than two thousand gallons per day,
27 except subsurface sewage disposal systems serving such buildings
28 designed by a professional engineer licensed or registered in the state,
29 centralized sewage disposal systems and small community sewerage
30 systems;

31 (8) "Phase II on-site wastewater specialist" means an on-site
32 wastewater specialist certified by the commissioner to act as an on-site
33 wastewater specialist for a subsurface sewage disposal system serving
34 a building with a design flow between two thousand and ten thousand
35 gallons per day;

36 (9) "Phase III on-site wastewater specialist" means an on-site
37 wastewater specialist certified by the commissioner to act as an on-site
38 wastewater specialist for an alternative on-site sewage treatment system
39 serving a building with a design flow of ten thousand gallons per day
40 or less; and

41 (10) "Small community sewerage system" means any subsurface
42 sewage disposal system (A) serving two or more residential buildings

43 or residential institutions located on the same lot, and (B) that is not
44 connected to a municipal sewerage system. "Small community sewerage
45 system" does not include any subsurface sewage disposal system
46 serving only a principal dwelling unit and an accessory apartment, as
47 defined in section 8-1a of the general statutes, or a central subsurface
48 sewage disposal system.

49 (b) (1) On and after October 1, 2026, no person, including a licensed
50 environmental health specialist, as defined in section 20-358 of the
51 general statutes, shall perform the duties of an on-site wastewater
52 specialist unless such person is (A) certified by the commissioner
53 pursuant to the provisions of this section, and (B) appointed by a local
54 director of health to perform the duties of an on-site wastewater
55 specialist as an employee or contractor of the municipal health
56 department or health district. The local director of health shall maintain
57 records of such appointments and provide the department a copy of, or
58 access to, such records upon the commissioner's request.

59 (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of this subsection, an agent of the
60 local director of health may perform the duties of an on-site wastewater
61 specialist for a local director of health without obtaining certification
62 pursuant to the provisions of this section, provided such agent applies
63 for an initial certification as an on-site wastewater specialist pursuant to
64 the provisions of this section not later than October 1, 2027.

65 (c) (1) An agent of the local director of health, approved pursuant to
66 section 19-13-B103e(b)(2)(A) of the regulations of Connecticut state
67 agencies, shall seek initial certification as a Phase I on-site wastewater
68 specialist and an agent of the local director of health, approved pursuant
69 to section 19-13-B103e(b)(2)(B) of the regulations of Connecticut state
70 agencies, shall seek initial certification as a Phase II on-site wastewater
71 specialist. After receiving initial certification, such certification shall be
72 renewed in accordance with the provisions of subsection (e) of this
73 section. On and after the date on which the commissioner begins issuing
74 certifications pursuant to the provisions of this section, the
75 commissioner shall not grant any approval of an agent of the local

76 director of health pursuant to section 19-13-B103e of the regulations of
77 Connecticut state agencies.

78 (2) Employees or contractors of the department may conduct
79 regulatory inspections and investigate complaints concerning
80 subsurface sewage disposal systems on behalf of the department
81 without obtaining certification as an on-site wastewater specialist
82 pursuant to the provisions of this section.

83 (3) An applicant for certification as an on-site wastewater specialist
84 may perform the duties of an on-site wastewater specialist as part of a
85 practical component of a training course, as described in subsection (i)
86 of this section, developed by the department that is taught by
87 department staff or an approved training provider holding a
88 certification for the certification level sought.

89 (d) Except as provided in subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of this
90 section, a person may apply, in a form and manner prescribed by the
91 commissioner, for an initial certification after (1) completing a training
92 course prescribed by the commissioner, and (2) receiving a passing score
93 on an examination prescribed by the commissioner for the on-site
94 wastewater specialist certification level the applicant seeks. No person
95 may apply for certification as a Phase III on-site wastewater specialist
96 earlier than the date on which minimum requirements for alternative
97 on-site sewage treatment systems are established in accordance with the
98 provisions of section 19a-35a of the general statutes.

99 (e) There shall be no fee to apply for an initial on-site wastewater
100 specialist certification or to renew such certification. A certification shall
101 be renewed in accordance with the provisions of section 19a-88 of the
102 general statutes, as amended by this act.

103 (f) The commissioner may require on-site wastewater specialists to
104 attend conferences to provide information and updates regarding on-
105 site sewage treatment systems, which may include, but need not be
106 limited to, a review of the department's technical standards for the
107 siting, design and installation requirements of a subsurface sewage

108 disposal system. The commissioner may conduct such conferences in
109 person, online or by prerecorded online presentations. The
110 commissioner shall not conduct more than two such conferences in any
111 one calendar year.

112 (g) An on-site wastewater specialist shall only hold a certification as
113 a Phase I, Phase II or Phase III on-site wastewater specialist and shall
114 not hold more than one such certification at one time. A Phase I on-site
115 wastewater specialist shall only perform activities associated with a
116 Phase I on-site wastewater specialist certification. A Phase II on-site
117 wastewater specialist may perform activities associated with a Phase I
118 and Phase II on-site wastewater specialist certification. A Phase III on-
119 site wastewater specialist may perform activities associated with Phase
120 I and Phase II on-site wastewater specialist certification and activities
121 associated with alternative on-site sewage treatment systems. No
122 person shall apply for certification as a Phase II on-site wastewater
123 specialist without having previously obtained certification as a Phase I
124 on-site wastewater specialist or served as an agent of a local director of
125 health prior to October 1, 2026. No person shall apply for certification as
126 a Phase III on-site wastewater specialist without having previously
127 obtained certification as a Phase II on-site wastewater specialist.

128 (h) The commissioner shall develop the following initial certification
129 applications: (1) Phase I or Phase II on-site wastewater specialist for
130 agents of local directors of health approved prior to October 1, 2026,
131 which shall include an attestation of such approval prior to October 1,
132 2026, (2) Phase I on-site wastewater specialist, (3) Phase II on-site
133 wastewater specialist, and (4) Phase III on-site wastewater specialist.
134 The commissioner shall also develop a renewal certification application
135 and an application for training providers seeking the commissioner's
136 approval to provide on-site wastewater specialist training courses
137 pursuant to the provisions of subsection (i) of this section.

138 (i) The commissioner shall develop training courses and
139 corresponding examinations for Phase I, Phase II and Phase III on-site
140 wastewater specialists. The training courses may include a practical

141 component, plan reviews and homework. The commissioner may
142 approve training providers to teach the courses. To be approved, a
143 training provider shall demonstrate, in a form and manner prescribed
144 by the commissioner, that the training course and its materials are
145 consistent with the department's technical standards for the siting,
146 design and installation of subsurface sewage disposal systems. Any
147 approval granted pursuant to the provisions of this subsection shall
148 expire three years after the date of such approval. The commissioner
149 may administer or contract with a testing center to administer training
150 courses or certification examinations.

151 (j) The commissioner may adopt regulations concerning the
152 certification of on-site wastewater specialists, in accordance with the
153 provisions of chapter 54 of the general statutes, that shall include, but
154 need not be limited to: (1) The scope of duties performed by each
155 certification of on-site wastewater specialist; (2) requirements and
156 procedures for the issuance of an initial certification; (3) requirements
157 and procedures to renew certification, in accordance with section 19-88
158 of the general statutes; (4) standards and procedures for certification
159 examinations administered by the commissioner or a testing center; (5)
160 training standards required for initial and renewal certification; and (6)
161 standards and procedures for the commissioner's approval of training
162 providers and courses of study offered by training providers. The
163 commissioner may implement policies and procedures necessary to
164 implement the provisions of this section while in the process of adopting
165 such policies and procedures as regulations, provided the commissioner
166 publishes notice of intent to adopt regulations on the eRegulations
167 System not later than twenty days after the date of implementation of
168 such policies and procedures. Policies and procedures implemented
169 pursuant to this subsection shall be valid until final regulations are
170 adopted in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54 of the general
171 statutes.

172 (k) (1) The commissioner may take any disciplinary action against an
173 on-site wastewater specialist permitted under section 19a-17 of the
174 general statutes, except for the assessment of a civil penalty, for any of

175 the following reasons: (A) Fraud or material deception in obtaining
176 initial certification or renewal certification or the reinstatement of a
177 certificate; (B) fraudulent practices including, but not limited to,
178 acceptance of bribes in the performance of the on-site wastewater
179 specialist's professional activities; (C) incompetent, negligent or illegal
180 performance of the on-site wastewater specialist's professional duties;
181 (D) conviction of the on-site wastewater specialist for a felony; or (E)
182 failure of the on-site wastewater specialist to complete the mandatory
183 training or attend mandatory conferences.

184 (2) The commissioner may take any disciplinary action against a
185 training provider permitted under section 19a-17 of the general statutes,
186 except for the assessment of a civil penalty, if the commissioner
187 determines that (A) a training course's hours or materials were not
188 consistent with the department's technical standards for the siting,
189 design and installation of subsurface sewage disposal systems; or (B) the
190 training provider engaged in incompetent, negligent or illegal activities
191 in the provision of training courses.

192 Sec. 2. Subsection (c) of section 19a-14 of the 2026 supplement to the
193 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
194 thereof (*Effective from passage*):

195 (c) No board shall exist for the following professions that are licensed
196 or otherwise regulated by the Department of Public Health:

197 (1) Speech and language pathologist and audiologist;

198 (2) Hearing instrument specialist;

199 (3) Nursing home administrator;

200 (4) Environmental health specialist;

201 (5) Subsurface sewage system installer or cleaner;

202 (6) Marital and family therapist and marriage and family therapist
203 associate;

- 204 (7) Nurse-midwife;
- 205 (8) Licensed clinical social worker;
- 206 (9) Respiratory care practitioner;
- 207 (10) Asbestos contractor, asbestos consultant and asbestos training
208 provider;
- 209 (11) Massage therapist;
- 210 (12) Registered nurse's aide;
- 211 (13) Radiographer;
- 212 (14) Dental hygienist;
- 213 (15) Dietitian-Nutritionist;
- 214 (16) Asbestos abatement worker;
- 215 (17) Asbestos abatement site supervisor;
- 216 (18) Licensed or certified alcohol and drug counselor;
- 217 (19) Professional counselor and professional counselor associate;
- 218 (20) Acupuncturist;
- 219 (21) Occupational therapist and occupational therapist assistant;
- 220 (22) Lead abatement contractor, lead consultant contractor, lead
221 consultant, lead abatement supervisor, lead abatement worker, lead
222 training provider, lead inspector, lead inspector risk assessor and lead
223 planner-project designer;
- 224 (23) Emergency medical technician, advanced emergency medical
225 technician, emergency medical responder and emergency medical
226 services instructor;
- 227 (24) Paramedic;

- 228 (25) Athletic trainer;
- 229 (26) Perfusionist;
- 230 (27) Master social worker subject to the provisions of section 20-195v;
- 231 (28) Radiologist assistant, subject to the provisions of section 20-74tt;
- 232 (29) Homeopathic physician;
- 233 (30) Certified water treatment plant operator, certified distribution
234 system operator, certified small water system operator, certified
235 backflow prevention device tester and certified cross connection survey
236 inspector, including certified limited operators, certified conditional
237 operators and certified operators in training;
- 238 (31) Tattoo technician;
- 239 (32) Genetic counselor;
- 240 (33) Behavior analyst;
- 241 (34) Art therapist;
- 242 (35) Esthetician;
- 243 (36) Eyelash technician; [and]
- 244 (37) Nail technician; and
- 245 (38) On-site wastewater specialist.

246 The department shall assume all powers and duties normally vested
247 with a board in administering regulatory jurisdiction over such
248 professions. The uniform provisions of this chapter and chapters 368v,
249 369 to 381a, inclusive, 383 to 388, inclusive, 393a, 395, 398, 399, 400a and
250 400c, including, but not limited to, standards for entry and renewal;
251 grounds for professional discipline; receiving and processing
252 complaints; and disciplinary sanctions, shall apply, except as otherwise
253 provided by law, to the professions listed in this subsection.

254 Sec. 3. Subsection (c) of section 19a-14 of the 2026 supplement to the
255 general statutes, as amended by section 196 of public act 25-168, is
256 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
257 *2026*):

258 (c) No board shall exist for the following professions that are licensed
259 or otherwise regulated by the Department of Public Health:

260 (1) Speech and language pathologist and audiologist;

261 (2) Hearing instrument specialist;

262 (3) Nursing home administrator;

263 (4) Environmental health specialist;

264 (5) Subsurface sewage system installer or cleaner;

265 (6) Marital and family therapist and marriage and family therapist
266 associate;

267 (7) Nurse-midwife;

268 (8) Licensed clinical social worker;

269 (9) Respiratory care practitioner;

270 (10) Asbestos contractor, asbestos consultant and asbestos training
271 provider;

272 (11) Massage therapist;

273 (12) Registered nurse's aide;

274 (13) Radiographer;

275 (14) Dental hygienist;

276 (15) Dietitian-Nutritionist;

277 (16) Asbestos abatement worker;

- 278 (17) Asbestos abatement site supervisor;
- 279 (18) Licensed or certified alcohol and drug counselor;
- 280 (19) Professional counselor and professional counselor associate;
- 281 (20) Acupuncturist;
- 282 (21) Occupational therapist and occupational therapist assistant;
- 283 (22) Lead abatement contractor, lead consultant contractor, lead
284 consultant, lead abatement supervisor, lead abatement worker, lead
285 training provider, lead inspector, lead inspector risk assessor and lead
286 planner-project designer;
- 287 (23) Emergency medical technician, advanced emergency medical
288 technician, emergency medical responder and emergency medical
289 services instructor;
- 290 (24) Paramedic;
- 291 (25) Athletic trainer;
- 292 (26) Perfusionist;
- 293 (27) Master social worker subject to the provisions of section 20-195v;
- 294 (28) Radiologist assistant, subject to the provisions of section 20-74tt;
- 295 (29) Homeopathic physician;
- 296 (30) Certified water treatment plant operator, certified distribution
297 system operator, certified small water system operator, certified
298 backflow prevention device tester and certified cross connection survey
299 inspector, including certified limited operators, certified conditional
300 operators and certified operators in training;
- 301 (31) Tattoo technician;
- 302 (32) Genetic counselor;

- 303 (33) Behavior analyst;
- 304 (34) Art therapist;
- 305 (35) Esthetician;
- 306 (36) Eyelash technician;
- 307 (37) Nail technician; [and]
- 308 (38) On-site wastewater specialist; and
- 309 [(38)] (39) Lactation consultant.

310 The department shall assume all powers and duties normally vested
311 with a board in administering regulatory jurisdiction over such
312 professions. The uniform provisions of this chapter and chapters 368v,
313 369 to 381a, inclusive, 382e to 388, inclusive, 393a, 395, 398, 399, 400a and
314 400c, including, but not limited to, standards for entry and renewal;
315 grounds for professional discipline; receiving and processing
316 complaints; and disciplinary sanctions, shall apply, except as otherwise
317 provided by law, to the professions listed in this subsection.

318 Sec. 4. Subsection (e) of section 19a-88 of the 2026 supplement to the
319 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
320 thereof (*Effective from passage*):

321 (e) (1) Each person holding a license or certificate issued under
322 section 19a-514, 20-65k, 20-74s, 20-185k, 20-185l, 20-195cc or 20-206ll and
323 chapters 370 to 373, inclusive, 375, 378 to 381a, inclusive, 383 to 383c,
324 inclusive, 383g, 384, 384a, 384b, 385, 393a, 395, 399 or 400a and section
325 20-206n or 20-206o shall, annually, or, in the case of a person holding a
326 license as a marital and family therapist associate under section 20-195c
327 on or before twenty-four months after the date of initial licensure,
328 during the month of such person's birth, apply for renewal of such
329 license or certificate to the Department of Public Health, giving such
330 person's name in full, such person's residence and business address and
331 such other information as the department requests.

332 (2) Each person holding a license or certificate issued under section
333 19a-514, and chapters 384a, 384c, 384d, 386, 387, 388 and 398 shall apply
334 for renewal of such license or certificate once every two years, during
335 the month of such person's birth, giving such person's name in full, such
336 person's residence and business address and such other information as
337 the department requests.

338 (3) Each person holding a certificate issued under section 20-195ttt
339 shall apply for renewal of such certificate once every three years, during
340 the month of such person's birth, giving such person's name in full, such
341 person's residence and business address and such other information as
342 the department requests.

343 (4) Each person holding a license or certificate issued pursuant to
344 chapter 400c shall, annually, during the month of such person's birth,
345 apply for renewal of such license or certificate to the department. Each
346 lead training provider certified pursuant to chapter 400c and each
347 asbestos training provider certified pursuant to chapter 400a shall,
348 annually, during the anniversary month of such training provider's
349 initial certification, apply for renewal of such certificate to the
350 department.

351 (5) Each entity holding a license issued pursuant to section 20-475
352 shall, annually, during the anniversary month of initial licensure, apply
353 for renewal of such license or certificate to the department.

354 (6) Each person holding a license issued pursuant to section 20-162bb
355 shall, annually, during the month of such person's birth, apply for
356 renewal of such license to the Department of Public Health, upon
357 payment of a fee of three hundred twenty dollars, giving such person's
358 name in full, such person's residence and business address and such
359 other information as the department requests.

360 (7) Each person holding a license issued pursuant to section 20-278h
361 shall, once every two years, during the anniversary month of initial
362 licensure, apply for renewal of such license to the department.

363 (8) Each person holding a certificate pursuant to section 1 of this act
364 shall, on or before three years after the date of issuance of an initial or
365 renewal certification, apply for renewal of such certificate to the
366 department.

367 Sec. 5. Subsection (e) of section 19a-88 of the 2026 supplement to the
368 general statutes, as amended by section 197 of public act 25-168, is
369 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
370 *2026*):

371 (e) (1) Each person holding a license or certificate issued under
372 section 19a-514, 20-65k, 20-74s, 20-185k, 20-185l, 20-195cc or 20-206ll and
373 chapters 370 to 373, inclusive, 375, 378 to 381a, inclusive, 383 to 383c,
374 inclusive, 383g, 384, 384a, 384b, 385, 393a, 395, 399 or 400a and section
375 20-206n or 20-206o shall, annually, or, in the case of a person holding a
376 license as a marital and family therapist associate under section 20-195c
377 on or before twenty-four months after the date of initial licensure,
378 during the month of such person's birth, apply for renewal of such
379 license or certificate to the Department of Public Health, giving such
380 person's name in full, such person's residence and business address and
381 such other information as the department requests.

382 (2) Each person holding a license or certificate issued under section
383 19a-514, and chapters 382e, 384a, 384c, 384d, 386, 387, 388 and 398 shall
384 apply for renewal of such license or certificate once every two years,
385 during the month of such person's birth, giving such person's name in
386 full, such person's residence and business address and such other
387 information as the department requests.

388 (3) Each person holding a certificate issued under section 20-195ttt
389 shall apply for renewal of such certificate once every three years, during
390 the month of such person's birth, giving such person's name in full, such
391 person's residence and business address and such other information as
392 the department requests.

393 (4) Each person holding a license or certificate issued pursuant to
394 chapter 400c shall, annually, during the month of such person's birth,

395 apply for renewal of such license or certificate to the department. Each
396 lead training provider certified pursuant to chapter 400c and each
397 asbestos training provider certified pursuant to chapter 400a shall,
398 annually, during the anniversary month of such training provider's
399 initial certification, apply for renewal of such certificate to the
400 department.

401 (5) Each entity holding a license issued pursuant to section 20-475
402 shall, annually, during the anniversary month of initial licensure, apply
403 for renewal of such license or certificate to the department.

404 (6) Each person holding a license issued pursuant to section 20-162bb
405 shall, annually, during the month of such person's birth, apply for
406 renewal of such license to the Department of Public Health, upon
407 payment of a fee of three hundred twenty dollars, giving such person's
408 name in full, such person's residence and business address and such
409 other information as the department requests.

410 (7) Each person holding a license issued pursuant to section 20-278h
411 shall, once every two years, during the anniversary month of initial
412 licensure, apply for renewal of such license to the department.

413 (8) Each person holding a certificate pursuant to section 1 of this act
414 shall, on or before three years after the date of issuance of an initial or
415 renewal certification, apply for renewal of such certificate to the
416 department.

417 Sec. 6. Subsection (n) of section 25-32 of the general statutes is
418 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
419 *2026*):

420 (n) (1) On and after the effective date of regulations adopted under
421 this subsection, no person shall operate any water treatment plant,
422 water distribution system or small water system that treats or supplies
423 water used or intended for use by the public, test any backflow
424 prevention device, perform a cross connection survey without a
425 certificate issued by the commissioner under this subsection or operate

426 any water treatment plant or water distribution system as an operator-
427 in-training unless such person is issued a certificate by the
428 commissioner under this subsection. The commissioner shall adopt
429 regulations, in accordance with chapter 54, to provide: (A) Standards for
430 the operation of such water treatment plants, water distribution systems
431 and small water systems; (B) standards and procedures for the issuance
432 of certificates to operators and operators-in-training of such water
433 treatment plants and water distribution systems and operators of small
434 water systems, including, but not limited to, standards and procedures
435 for the department's approval of third parties to administer certification
436 examinations to such operators and operators-in-training; (C)
437 procedures for the renewal of such certificates to operators every three
438 years; (D) standards for training required for the issuance or renewal of
439 a certificate; (E) standards and procedures for the department's
440 approval of course providers and courses of study as they relate to
441 certified operators and certified operators-in-training of water treatment
442 plants and water distribution systems and certified operators of small
443 water systems and certified persons who test backflow prevention
444 devices or perform cross connection surveys for initial and renewal
445 applications; and (F) standards and procedures for the issuance and
446 renewal of certificates to persons who test backflow prevention devices
447 or perform cross connection surveys. Such regulations shall be
448 consistent with applicable federal law and guidelines for operator
449 certification programs promulgated by the United States Environmental
450 Protection Agency. For purposes of this subsection, "small water
451 system" means a public water system, as defined in section 25-33d, that
452 serves less than one thousand persons and has no treatment or has only
453 treatment that does not require any chemical treatment, process
454 adjustment, backwashing or media regeneration by an operator.

455 (2) The commissioner may take any disciplinary action set forth in
456 section 19a-17, except for the assessment of a civil penalty under
457 subdivision (7) of subsection (a) of section 19a-17, against an operator,
458 an operator-in-training, a person who tests backflow prevention devices
459 or a person who performs cross connection surveys holding a certificate
460 issued under this subsection for any of the following reasons: (A) Fraud

461 or material deception in procuring a certificate, the renewal of a
462 certificate or the reinstatement of a certificate; (B) fraud or material
463 deception in the performance of the certified operator's or certified
464 operator-in-training's professional activities; (C) incompetent, negligent
465 or illegal performance of the certified operator's or certified operator-in-
466 training's professional activities; (D) conviction of the certified operator
467 or certified operator-in-training for a felony; or (E) failure of the certified
468 operator or certified operator-in-training to complete the training
469 required under subdivision (1) of this subsection.

470 (3) The commissioner may issue an initial certificate to perform a
471 function set forth in subdivision (1) of this subsection upon receipt of a
472 completed application, in a form prescribed by the commissioner,
473 together with an application fee as follows: (A) For a water treatment
474 plant, water distribution system or small water system operator
475 certificate, or operator-in-training certificate for a water treatment plant
476 or water distribution system, two hundred twenty-four dollars, except
477 there shall be no such application fee required for a student enrolled in
478 an accredited high school small water system operator certification
479 course; (B) for a backflow prevention device tester certificate, one
480 hundred fifty-four dollars; and (C) for a cross-connection survey
481 inspector certificate, one hundred fifty-four dollars. A certificate issued
482 pursuant to this subdivision shall expire three years from the date of
483 issuance unless renewed by the certificate holder prior to such
484 expiration date, except a certificate issued for an operator-in-training
485 pursuant to this section shall expire six years from the date of issuance
486 and shall not be renewable. The commissioner may renew a certificate,
487 other than a certificate for an operator-in-training, for an additional
488 three years upon receipt of a completed renewal application, in a form
489 prescribed by the commissioner, together with a renewal application fee
490 as follows: (i) For a water treatment plant, water distribution system or
491 small water system operator certificate, ninety-eight dollars; (ii) for a
492 backflow prevention device tester certificate, sixty-nine dollars; and (iii)
493 for a cross-connection survey inspector certificate, sixty-nine dollars.

494 (4) (A) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivisions (1) and (3) of

495 this subsection, the commissioner may issue a certification to an
496 applicant for water treatment plant operator, water distribution system
497 operator or small water system operator under this subsection upon
498 receiving such applicant's written application, in a form and manner
499 prescribed by the commissioner, if the applicant (i) is an apprentice
500 registered with the Labor Department, (ii) has successfully completed
501 an apprenticeship approved by the Labor Department and conducted in
502 accordance with sections 31-22m to 31-22u, inclusive, for the type of
503 system for which the apprentice is seeking certification, and (iii) has
504 passed a written examination prescribed in the regulations of
505 Connecticut state agencies after completion of an approved registered
506 apprenticeship program for the classification level sought for
507 certification. An apprentice shall provide written notification to the
508 department not later than ten days before participating in such
509 apprenticeship program. Such written notification shall be in a form and
510 manner prescribed by the commissioner and shall include, but need not
511 be limited to, information regarding the entity providing the
512 apprenticeship program and the certified water operator or operators
513 directly supervising such program. A registered apprentice shall be
514 under direct supervision of a certified water operator of the type of
515 system for which the apprentice is seeking certification but shall not
516 make any process and system integrity decisions concerning the quality
517 and quantity of water that affects public health. Failure of a certified
518 water operator to provide the supervision or training required under
519 this section shall be grounds for disciplinary action against the certified
520 water operator pursuant to the provisions of this section.

521 (B) The commissioner, in consultation with the Labor Commissioner
522 and an international nonprofit association dedicated to the
523 improvement of drinking water and supply, shall develop and
524 implement an apprenticeship program for the purpose of implementing
525 the provisions of this subdivision.

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>	19a-14(c)
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	19a-14(c)
Sec. 4	<i>from passage</i>	19a-88(e)
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	19a-88(e)
Sec. 6	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	25-32(n)

PH *Joint Favorable Subst.*

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:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 27 \$	FY 28 \$
Public Health, Dept.	GF - Cost	58,200	72,000
State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits ¹	GF - Cost	22,600	30,100

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill establishes an apprenticeship program for certain water operators, resulting in a General Fund cost of \$80,800 in FY 27 and \$102,100 annually thereafter as described below. The bill additionally establishes certification for wastewater specialists, which has no fiscal impact as there are no associated fees.

Section 6 requires the Department of Public Health (DPH), in consultation with the Department of Labor and an international nonprofit association dedicated to the improvement of drinking water, to develop and implement an apprenticeship program for certain water operators.

DPH requires a health program associate with an annualized salary of \$72,000 (and \$30,100 fringe benefits) to coordinate and administer the new training program, with partial-year costs in FY 27 and full-year

¹The fringe benefit costs for most state employees are budgeted centrally in accounts administered by the Comptroller. The estimated active employee fringe benefit cost associated with most personnel changes is 41.82% of payroll in FY 27.

costs beginning in FY 28.² An additional one-time Other Expenses cost of \$4,200 in FY 27 will provide a laptop and office supplies for the new position.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

² In FY 27, salary costs will be \$54,000 (and \$22,600 fringe benefits), reflecting an October 1, 2026 start date.

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 5519*****AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH'S RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING ON-SITE WASTEWATER SPECIALISTS AND WATER OPERATOR APPRENTICES.*****SUMMARY**

This bill creates a three-phase certification program for on-site wastewater specialists who perform inspections and similar work related to subsurface sewage disposal systems (septic systems). Starting on October 1, 2026, it generally requires anyone performing the duties of an on-site wastewater specialist to (1) become certified by the Department of Public Health (DPH) and (2) be appointed by a local health director as the local department's or district's employee or contractor. It provides a grace period for people currently approved under existing regulations to serve in this role.

Separately, the bill allows DPH to certify apprentice operators for water treatment plants, water distribution systems, or small water systems. To qualify, an applicant must complete a state Department of Labor (DOL)-approved apprenticeship and pass a written exam. The bill requires DPH, in consultation with DOL and a water-focused nonprofit, to develop and implement an apprenticeship program for this purpose.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except the apprenticeship provisions and certain conforming changes relating to the bill's other provisions are effective July 1, 2026.

§§ 1-5 — ON-SITE WASTEWATER SPECIALIST CERTIFICATION***Certification Requirement and Exceptions***

Starting October 1, 2026, the bill generally requires anyone (including a licensed environmental health specialist) working as an on-site wastewater specialist to be (1) certified by DPH and (2) appointed by a

local health director to perform these duties as the local health department's or district's employee or contractor. It requires the local health director to keep records of these appointments and give DPH, upon request, a copy of the records or access to them.

But under the bill, if a local health director's agent is already approved under existing regulations to investigate, inspect, and approve plans for subsurface sewage disposal systems, the agent may work as an on-site wastewater specialist before getting certified. To continue working in this role, these agents must apply for certification by October 1, 2027. Once the commissioner begins granting certifications under the bill, she is barred from issuing approvals under the existing regulation.

The bill allows applicants, before getting certified, to work as on-site wastewater specialists as part of a DPH-developed training course taught by department staff or an approved training provider holding the appropriate certification level (see below).

Also, the bill allows DPH employees or contractors, without getting certified, to perform regulatory inspections and investigate complaints about subsurface sewage disposal systems.

Scope of Duties

Under the bill, an on-site wastewater specialist can do the following tasks relating to subsurface sewage disposal systems within the local health director's jurisdiction: (1) review and approve plans, (2) conduct regulatory inspections, (3) investigate complaints, and (4) perform other related duties the commissioner requires.

The bill creates a three-phase certification program, with the phases corresponding to different buildings and systems, as follows.

Table: Certification Phases

Certification	System Type and Maximum Size (Based on Building Design Flow)
Phase I	Subsurface sewage disposal system (under 2,000 gallons per day), but not systems serving buildings designed by a state-credentialed professional engineer, centralized sewage disposal systems (central systems), or small community sewerage systems. (A central system serves (1) a residential building and at least one outbuilding or nonresidential building or (2) multiple nonresidential buildings or outbuildings. A small community system serves multiple residential buildings on the same lot and is not connected to a municipal system; it is not a (1) central system or (2) system serving only a principal dwelling unit and an accessory apartment.)
Phase II	Subsurface sewage disposal system (2,000 to 10,000 gallons per day).
Phase III	Alternative on-site sewage treatment system (up to 10,000 gallons per day).

The bill allows someone to hold only one phase of certification at a time, and each phase allows the holder to perform activities at that phase or lower phases (for example, a Phase II specialist can perform activities associated with Phase I or II).

Application Process

The bill requires DPH to develop applications for:

1. initial certification as a Phase I, II, or III on-site wastewater specialist;
2. initial certification as a Phase I or II specialist for agents approved under existing regulations before October 1, 2026 (and the application must attest to that approval);
3. renewal certification; and
4. training providers (see below).

The bill prohibits anyone from applying for Phase II certification unless the person was previously certified at Phase I or served as an approved agent before October 1, 2026. It bars anyone from applying for Phase III certification (1) unless the person was previously certified at Phase II and (2) until DPH sets the minimum requirements for alternative on-site sewage treatment systems, as existing law requires.

Under the bill, an agent approved under the existing regulation must seek initial certification at Phase I or II, depending on the specifics of their prior approval. After initially becoming certified, these agents must renew their certification in the same way as other certificate holders. There is no fee for an initial or renewal certification, and certifications must be renewed every three years.

Before applying for initial certification, a person (other than an agent approved under the existing regulation) must first complete a training course and pass an exam at the appropriate phase, with DPH setting the course and exam.

Conferences, Training Courses, and Examinations

Under the bill, the DPH commissioner may require on-site wastewater specialists to attend conferences providing information and updates on on-site sewage treatment systems, such as a review of the department's technical standards for the siting, design, and installation of subsurface sewage disposal systems. The bill allows the commissioner to hold up to two of these conferences per calendar year and specifies that they may be in-person or online (live or pre-recorded).

The bill requires the commissioner to develop training courses (which may include a practical component, plan reviews, and homework) and corresponding exams for the three specialist phases. She may approve training providers to teach the courses, with approval expiring after three years. To be approved, a training provider must show that the course and its materials are consistent with the department's technical standards for subsurface sewage disposal systems.

The commissioner may administer training courses or certification exams or contract with a testing center to do so.

Regulations; Policies and Procedures

The bill allows the commissioner to adopt regulations on the certification of on-site wastewater specialists. If adopted, the regulations must include:

1. the scope of duties performed with each specialist certification,
2. requirements and procedures for initial and renewal certifications,
3. exam standards and procedures,
4. required training standards for initial and renewal certification, and
5. standards and procedures for approving training providers and courses.

The commissioner may adopt implementing policies and procedures while in the process of adopting the regulations, as long as she posts her intent to adopt regulations in the eRegulations System within 20 days after adopting the policies and procedures. The policies and procedures are valid until the final regulations are adopted.

The bill specifies that no new regulatory board is created for on-site wastewater specialists.

Disciplinary Actions

The bill allows the commissioner to take disciplinary actions available to her (other than assessing a civil penalty) against an on-site wastewater specialist for:

1. fraud or material deception in obtaining initial, renewal, or reinstated certification;
2. fraudulent practices, including accepting bribes in performing professional activities;
3. incompetent, negligent, or illegal performance of duties;
4. a felony conviction; or
5. failure to complete mandatory training or attend mandatory conferences.

The bill also allows the commissioner to take disciplinary action (other than assessing a civil penalty) against a training provider if she determines that (1) a training course's hours or materials were inconsistent with DPH's technical standards for subsurface sewage disposal systems or (2) the provider engaged in incompetent, negligent, or illegal activities in providing training courses.

By law, disciplinary actions available to DPH include, among other things, (1) revoking or suspending a credential, (2) censuring the violator, (3) issuing a letter of reprimand, or (4) placing the violator on probationary status (CGS § 19a-17).

§ 6 — APPRENTICE WATER SYSTEM OPERATORS

The bill allows DPH, as an exception to existing certification requirements, to certify apprentice operators for water treatment plants, water distribution systems, or small water systems. The bill requires DPH, in consultation with DOL and an international nonprofit focused on improving drinking water and supply, to develop and implement an apprenticeship program for this purpose.

To qualify for certification under the bill, an applicant must (1) be a DOL-registered apprentice who completed a DOL-approved apprenticeship for the applicable system type and (2) have passed a written exam (set in state regulations) after completing the apprenticeship. Unlike the standard certification process, there is no application fee.

Under the bill, the apprentice must notify DPH in writing, in a way the commissioner sets, at least 10 days before participating in the apprenticeship program. The notification must include information on the entity providing the program and the certified water operator or operators directly supervising it. The apprentice must (1) be directly supervised by a certified water operator of the system type for which the apprentice is seeking certification and (2) not make any process or system integrity decisions about water quality or quantity that affect public health. If the certified operator fails to provide the apprentice

with the required supervision or training, the operator may be subject to disciplinary action (such as suspension of their certificate).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 32 Nay 0 (03/23/2026)