



# Senate

General Assembly

**File No. 478**

February Session, 2026

Substitute Senate Bill No. 456

*Senate, April 7, 2026*

The Committee on Environment reported through SEN. LOPES of the 6th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

***AN ACT CONCERNING A GRANT PROGRAM FOR WILDLIFE REHABILITATION FACILITIES IN THE STATE.***

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

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) (a) The Commissioner of  
2 Energy and Environmental Protection may establish a grant program  
3 for the issuance of grants to nonprofit wildlife rehabilitation  
4 organizations with one or more facilities in the state that register with  
5 the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and that meet  
6 any requirements the commissioner establishes for the registration of  
7 such wildlife rehabilitation organizations. The commissioner may  
8 accept any funds or donations for the purpose of issuing such grants  
9 and may establish an account for the receipt of any such funds or  
10 donations. Any funds in such account shall not lapse at the conclusion  
11 of any fiscal year and shall remain available to the commissioner for the  
12 issuance of such grants.

13 (b) Any such registration requirement shall require a nonprofit  
14 wildlife organization to submit, on an annual basis, to the commissioner

15 information concerning such organization, including, but not limited to,  
 16 the name and contact information for the owner or operator of such  
 17 wildlife rehabilitation organization, the location of any such facility in  
 18 the state, the specific species of wildlife rehabilitated at any such facility,  
 19 the financial structure of such wildlife rehabilitation organization, and  
 20 the background, education and training of any staff member or  
 21 volunteer, including, but not limited to, any veterinarian, utilized or  
 22 employed by any such wildlife rehabilitation organization and any  
 23 other information that the commissioner deems relevant. The  
 24 commissioner may impose an annual registration fee for any such  
 25 wildlife rehabilitation organization.

26 (c) The commissioner may establish criteria for the issuance of any  
 27 such grants, including, but not limited to, priority criteria for the  
 28 issuance of any such grants. The commissioner may adopt regulations,  
 29 in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54 of the general statutes,  
 30 to implement the provisions of this section.

31 Sec. 2. (Effective July 1, 2026) The sum of five hundred thousand  
 32 dollars is appropriated to the Department of Energy and Environmental  
 33 Protection from the General Fund, for the fiscal year ending June 30,  
 34 2027, for the purpose of funding the wildlife rehabilitation organization  
 35 grant program described in section 1 of this act.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2026	New section
Sec. 2	July 1, 2026	New section

**ENV** 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 \$
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection	GF - Cost	581,304	81,304
State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits <sup>1</sup>	GF - Cost	34,001	34,001

Note: GF=General Fund

**Municipal Impact:** None

**Explanation**

The bill results in a cost to the state of \$615,305 in FY 27 and \$115,305 in FY 28, associated with establishing a grant program for certain nonprofit wildlife rehabilitation organizations.

In order to facilitate the program, set criteria for grants, and adopt implementing regulations, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) will require one Environmental Analyst 2 with an annual salary of \$81,304 and corresponding fringe benefits of \$34,001.

Additionally, the bill appropriates \$500,000 to DEEP in FY 27 for purposes of this program. The bill also allows DEEP to accept any funds or donations for purposes of issuing grants to qualifying organizations.

**Spending Cap**

sHB 5032, the FY 27 Revised Budget as favorably reported by the

<sup>1</sup>The 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.

Appropriations Committee, is under the spending cap by \$16.1 million in FY 27. The appropriation contained within the bill would result in the budget being under the spending cap by \$15.6 million in FY 27.

***The Out Years***

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

**OLR Bill Analysis****sSB 456*****AN ACT CONCERNING A GRANT PROGRAM FOR WILDLIFE REHABILITATION FACILITIES IN THE STATE.*****SUMMARY**

This bill allows the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner to create a grant program for certain nonprofit wildlife rehabilitation organizations and appropriates \$500,000 in FY 27 for the program. Specifically, organizations eligible to receive grants under this program must (1) have at least one in-state facility registered with DEEP and (2) meet registration requirements the commissioner sets.

Under the bill, any registration requirements the commissioner sets must require a wildlife rehabilitation organization to annually give DEEP information on the (1) organization's owner or operator, including their name and contact information; (2) applicable facility's location; (3) rehabilitated species it works with; (4) organization's financial structure; and (5) organization's employees' or volunteers' background, education, and training relevant to their work there, including any veterinarians it uses or employs. The DEEP commissioner may also require any other registration information she determines necessary and charge wildlife rehabilitation organizations an annual registration fee.

The bill allows the DEEP commissioner to (1) set criteria for the grant program, including priority criteria for grants, and (2) adopt implementing regulations. The commissioner may also create a nonlapsing account for the program and accept any funds or donations for making grants.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 34 Nay 0 (03/18/2026)