



General Assembly

**Amendment**

February Session, 2026

LCO No. 4498



Offered by:

REP. PARKER, 101<sup>st</sup> Dist.  
REP. CALLAHAN, 108<sup>th</sup> Dist.  
SEN. LOPES, 6<sup>th</sup> Dist.  
SEN. HARDING, 30<sup>th</sup> Dist.

To: House Bill No. 5525

File No. 437

Cal. No. 320

**"AN ACT CONCERNING A RAPID RESPONSE PROGRAM FOR CERTAIN AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES."**

1 Strike everything after the enacting clause and substitute the  
2 following in lieu thereof:

3 "Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2026*) (a) (1) For the purposes of  
4 this section, "rapid response" means a systematic effort to eradicate,  
5 contain or control hydrilla or other aquatic invasive plant species  
6 introduced into an ecosystem while the infestation of such ecosystem  
7 remains localized and includes actions that address novel introductions  
8 into a waterbody.

9 (2) The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station's Office of  
10 Aquatic Invasive Species shall set criteria for newly discovered aquatic  
11 invasive species and hydrilla populations discovered within the most  
12 recent three-year period, including satellite populations of such hydrilla

13 populations to qualify for rapid response pursuant to this section and  
14 shall publish and maintain a page on such agency's Internet web site  
15 that lists such eligible species. Such office shall notify the Department of  
16 Energy and Environmental Protection when any new species is added  
17 to such list.

18 (b) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 22a-339i of the general  
19 statutes, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection shall  
20 expedite any permitting associated with rapid response actions for the  
21 aquatic invasive species specified in subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of  
22 this section, to enable the timely containment of such species and reduce  
23 the risk of further spread within and between waterbodies, provided  
24 such priority expediting shall be given to permits for the containment of  
25 hydrilla.

26 (c) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 22-79a of the general  
27 statutes, the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station's Office of  
28 Aquatic Invasive Species shall identify new introductions of aquatic  
29 invasive plant species to the state and may coordinate and conduct  
30 rapid response efforts to any such new population in any waterbody in  
31 the state.

32 (d) (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (2) of  
33 subsection (h) of section 22a-66a of the general statutes, any rapid  
34 response herbicide treatment undertaken pursuant to the provisions of  
35 this section shall not require the provision of two individual notices to  
36 each owner of waterfront property on a privately owned lake or pond.  
37 One such notice by telephone, personal notification or by leaving a  
38 conspicuous notice on an entry door of the home located on such  
39 property shall be made not less than twenty-four hours prior to such  
40 treatment.

41 (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of this subsection and subsections  
42 (a) to (c), inclusive, of this section, any rapid response actions for newly  
43 introduced aquatic invasive plant species shall be timed in accordance  
44 with the best available science to occur prior to or during key

45 reproductive periods to minimize establishment and secondary spread  
46 of such aquatic invasive plant species.

47 (e) (1) The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station's Office of  
48 Aquatic Invasive Species shall assist rapid response efforts related to  
49 newly discovered hydrilla and newly introduced aquatic invasive  
50 species identified in state waterbodies by mapping the extent and  
51 location of such populations and documenting the presence and  
52 locations of relevant threatened and endangered species within a  
53 scientifically determined radius, as established in consultation with the  
54 Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's Natural  
55 Diversity Data Base program, while determining the sensitivity of such  
56 species to proposed herbicide treatments and other containment or  
57 eradication methods.

58 (2) The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station's Office of  
59 Aquatic Invasive Species, in consultation with the Department of  
60 Energy and Environmental Protection, shall develop a state rapid  
61 response protocol for hydrilla. Such protocol shall clearly define the  
62 roles, responsibilities and response actions for the Connecticut  
63 Agricultural Experiment Station's Office of Aquatic Invasive Species  
64 and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.  
65 Additionally, such protocol shall establish a coordinated framework for  
66 interagency response that identifies lead and supporting functions  
67 throughout the response process and that outlines next steps to contain  
68 or eradicate new hydrilla populations. Such steps may include public  
69 education and outreach, containment strategies, treatment methods and  
70 associated timelines and any additional actions deemed necessary by  
71 the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and the  
72 Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station's Office of Aquatic  
73 Invasive Species. Such protocol may serve as a template for responding  
74 to future introductions of new aquatic invasive species. Under any such  
75 protocol, (A) the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection  
76 shall issue expedited permits for rapid responses, and (B) the  
77 Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station's Office of Aquatic

78 Invasive Species shall be authorized to coordinate or conduct treatment  
 79 within the same season, in accordance with the provisions of  
 80 subdivision (2) of subsection (d) of this section, once such expedited  
 81 permitting occurs. The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station's  
 82 Office of Aquatic Invasive Species shall monitor progress and track  
 83 outcomes of such rapid response protocol to a specific population and  
 84 waterbody.

85 (3) The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station's Office of  
 86 Aquatic Invasive Species, in consultation with the Department of  
 87 Energy and Environmental Protection, shall develop a state-wide  
 88 aquatic invasive species management plan for public reference and may  
 89 consult other entities, including, but not limited to, the Invasive Plants  
 90 Council, established pursuant to section 22a-381 of the general statutes  
 91 through a public comment period.

92 (f) Notwithstanding any provision of the general statutes, the  
 93 Department of Public Health shall coordinate with the Department of  
 94 Energy and Environmental Protection to provide conditions for permits  
 95 to conduct treatment of an aquatic invasive species within a public  
 96 water supply watershed or within two hundred feet of a public water  
 97 supply well."

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	October 1, 2026	New section