



General Assembly

Amendment

February Session, 2026

LCO No. 4060



Offered by:
REP. PARKER, 101st Dist.

To: House Bill No. 5525

File No.

Cal. No.

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

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

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

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

37 (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of this subsection and subsections
38 (a) to (c), inclusive, of this section, any rapid response actions for newly
39 introduced aquatic invasive plant species shall be timed in accordance
40 with the best available science to occur prior to or during key
41 reproductive periods to minimize establishment and secondary spread
42 of such aquatic invasive plant species.

43 (e) (1) The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station's Office of
44 Aquatic Invasive Species shall assist rapid response efforts related to
45 newly discovered hydrilla and newly introduced aquatic invasive
46 species identified in state waterbodies by mapping the extent and

47 location of such populations and documenting the presence and
48 locations of relevant threatened and endangered species within a
49 scientifically determined radius, as established in consultation with the
50 Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's Natural
51 Diversity Data Base program, while determining the sensitivity of such
52 species to proposed herbicide treatments and other containment or
53 eradication methods.

54 (2) The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station's Office of
55 Aquatic Invasive Species, in consultation with the Department of
56 Energy and Environmental Protection, shall develop a state rapid
57 response protocol for hydrilla. Such protocol shall clearly define the
58 roles, responsibilities and response actions for the Connecticut
59 Agricultural Experiment Station's Office of Aquatic Invasive Species
60 and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.
61 Additionally, such protocol shall establish a coordinated framework for
62 interagency response that identifies lead and supporting functions
63 throughout the response process and that outlines next steps to contain
64 or eradicate new hydrilla populations. Such steps may include public
65 education and outreach, containment strategies, treatment methods and
66 associated timelines and any additional actions deemed necessary by
67 the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and the
68 Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station's Office of Aquatic
69 Invasive Species. Such protocol may serve as a template for responding
70 to future introductions of new aquatic invasive species. Under any such
71 protocol, (A) the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
72 shall issue expedited permits for rapid responses, and (B) the
73 Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station's Office of Aquatic
74 Invasive Species shall be authorized to coordinate or conduct treatment
75 within the same season, in accordance with the provisions of
76 subdivision (2) of subsection (d) of this section, once such expedited
77 permitting occurs. The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station's
78 Office of Aquatic Invasive Species shall monitor progress and track
79 outcomes of such rapid response protocol to a specific population and
80 waterbody.

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

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

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