

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 18-101—HB 5129

Environment Committee

Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A "SAVE OUR LAKES" NUMBER PLATE TO COMBAT AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES AND CYANOBACTERIA BLOOMS

SUMMARY: This act requires the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) commissioner, beginning January 1, 2020, to issue “Save Our Lakes” commemorative license plates. The DMV and Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioners must agree on a plate design that enhances public awareness of efforts to preserve and protect the state’s lakes and ponds from aquatic invasive species and cyanobacteria (e.g., blue-green algae) blooms.

The act creates a Connecticut lakes and ponds preservation account to be used by the DEEP commissioner for, among other things, restoring and rehabilitating state lakes and ponds; educating the public on the need to protect and preserve lakes and ponds; and reimbursing DMV for the cost of producing, issuing, renewing, and replacing Save Our Lakes plates.

The act requires the DMV commissioner to adopt regulations establishing a (1) fee to be charged for Save Our Lakes plates that is in addition to the regular fees required for registering a motor vehicle and (2) voluntary lakes and ponds preservation donation. It also allows the DMV commissioner to collect an additional voluntary \$15 donation at registration renewal for any vehicle with a Save Our Lakes plate. Fees and most donations collected must be deposited into the Connecticut lakes and ponds preservation account.

The act prohibits using Save Our Lakes plates for anything other than official registration marker plates, but allows DEEP to reproduce and market the plate’s image on clothing, recreational equipment, posters, mementos, or other products or programs that the commissioner deems suitable to support the Connecticut lakes and ponds preservation account. Any money received from such marketing must be deposited into the account.

Lastly, the act requires the DMV commissioner, in consultation with the DEEP commissioner, to adopt regulations establishing standards and procedures for issuing, renewing, and replacing Save Our Lakes plates.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2018

CONNECTICUT LAKES AND PONDS PRESERVATION ACCOUNT

The act establishes the Connecticut lakes and ponds preservation account as a separate, nonlapsing General Fund account. It requires the DEEP commissioner to

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use the money in the account for the following purposes:

1. restoring and rehabilitating Connecticut lakes and ponds;
2. DEEP programs to eradicate aquatic invasive species and cyanobacteria blooms;
3. education and public outreach programs to enhance the public's understanding of the need to preserve and protect the states' lakes and ponds;
4. allocating grants to state and municipal agencies and nonprofit organizations to conduct research and provide public education and awareness campaigns;
5. funding services that support the protection and conservation of the state's lakes and ponds; and
6. reimbursing DMV for the cost of producing, issuing, renewing, and replacing Save Our Lakes plates, including administrative expenses.

The act allows the DEEP commissioner to receive private donations to the account. Any such donations received must be deposited in the account.

FEES AND DONATIONS

The act requires the DMV commissioner to adopt regulations establishing the fee to be charged for Save Our Lakes plates, which is in addition to the regular fees required for registering a motor vehicle. The fee must be for Save Our Lakes plates with letters and numbers selected by the DMV commissioner, but he may charge a higher fee, in addition to fees permitted by law, for plates that (1) contain letters in place of numbers or (2) are low-number plates. The renewal fee for all Save Our Lakes plates, including letter-only and low-number plates, must be the same.

The act also requires the DMV commissioner to adopt regulations establishing a voluntary lakes and ponds preservation donation. Any such donations must be deposited in the Connecticut lakes and ponds preservation account.

Additionally, under the act, the DMV commissioner may request a voluntary \$15 donation when a person renews a registration for a vehicle with Save Our Lakes plates. Of this, \$5 may be applied to DMV's administrative costs and \$10 must be deposited in the Connecticut lakes and ponds preservation account.

Lastly, the act prohibits DMV from charging a transfer fee for transferring an existing registration to or from a registration with Save Our Lakes plates.