
OLR Bill Analysis

HB 6813 (as amended by House "A" and "B")*

AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SEABIRD AND SHOREBIRD PROTECTION PROGRAM.

SUMMARY

This bill (1) allows the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner to establish a seabird and shorebird protection program under which she may designate and identify protected areas on state-owned public property within the state's coastal area (i.e., the coastline along Long Island Sound) and (2) makes it an infraction to disturb these areas.

The bill authorizes the commissioner to create a list of birds to be protected. The list must include seabirds and shorebirds identified in state regulations as endangered, threatened, or of special concern.

Under the bill, the commissioner may designate seabird and shorebird protection areas on state-owned public property along the state's coastal area for any period from March 1 to September 15 each year. The commissioner must identify each protected area with string fencing, posts, and signs. She may have volunteers or her agents help install these.

The bill prohibits people from doing the following:

1. entering an identified protected area without the DEEP commissioner's authorization;
2. allowing a pet or other animal under their control, except for a service animal, from coming within 25 feet of an identified protected area; and
3. operating a vehicle or bicycle within 25 feet of an identified

protected area.

Under the bill, a person commits a separate infraction for each violation. The bill authorizes DEEP-appointed conservation officers and officers who can serve criminal process to enforce the bill's provisions.

*House Amendment "A" (1) requires the DEEP commissioner to draw from the established list of species that are endangered, threatened, and species of concern when developing the list of birds to be protected, rather than from Connecticut's Wildlife Action Plan; (2) specifies the officers that can enforce the bill's provisions; and (3) removes a provision from the underlying bill that would have allowed committed infractions to be handled through the Centralized Infractions Bureau.

*House Amendment "B" (1) reduces the area in the underlying bill from which pets, vehicles, and bicycles are prohibited from within 100 feet of the protected area to within 25 feet; (2) narrows the places in the underlying bill where the DEEP commissioner can designate protected areas to state-owned public property within the state's coastal area; and (3) specifies the dates between which she may designate protected areas.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2023

COMMITTEE ACTION

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 33 Nay 0 (03/24/2023)