



General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 5229

February Session, 2024



**AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
EELGRASS WORKING GROUP.**

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

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Not later than January 1,
2 2025, the members of the eelgrass working group, as constituted
3 pursuant to special act 23-7, shall reconvene to review the output of the
4 Eelgrass Collaborative related to permitting and policies surrounding
5 restoration of eelgrass in the state and review the attendant report
6 generated by the Eelgrass Collaborative. The working group shall
7 review the existing regulations under the United States Army Corps of
8 Engineers permits to evaluate any potential future modifications and
9 the need for similar modifications of the Department of Energy and
10 Environmental Protection's and the Department of Agriculture's Bureau
11 of Aquaculture's policies.

12 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) The Department of Energy and
13 Environmental Protection, in collaboration with the Department of
14 Agriculture's Bureau of Aquaculture and The University of Connecticut,
15 shall identify an individual to serve as the Connecticut Seagrass
16 Coordinator. Such coordinator shall oversee and interact with
17 stakeholders associated with eelgrass in Connecticut, Long Island
18 Sound and the broader eelgrass community. The coordinator shall: (1)

19 Work with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to
 20 develop policies and strategies for the sustainable harvesting of eelgrass
 21 seeds from existing Connecticut eelgrass meadows in order to utilize
 22 such seeds in eelgrass meadow restoration projects; (2) research, review
 23 and compile best management practices for conducting aquaculture in
 24 close proximity to eelgrass meadows; (3) prescribe eelgrass-friendly
 25 mooring systems in mooring fields with a high potential to host
 26 eelgrass, as predicted by the Eelgrass Habitat Suitability Index model
 27 and identify necessary attendant public awareness campaigns for use of
 28 such mooring systems; and (4) establish an appropriate set of metrics for
 29 the evaluation of any restoration efforts made by the state to yield a
 30 reasonable return on investment for such projects over the requisite
 31 period of time for any such project.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	New section

ENV Joint Favorable Subst.