

CHAPTER 185
SB 445 - FINAL VERSION

03/26/2026 1126s
7May2026... 1661h

2026 SESSION

26-2011
08/06

SENATE BILL

445

AN ACT relative to adjudicative proceedings where there is a council or board with jurisdiction.

SPONSORS: Sen. Pearl, Dist 17; Sen. Gannon, Dist 23; Sen. McGough, Dist 11; Rep. Slottje, Hills. 13; Rep. Thibault, Merr. 25

COMMITTEE: Energy and Natural Resources

ANALYSIS

This bill changes the process for appeals where there is a council or board with jurisdiction.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.
Matter removed from current law appears ~~[in brackets and struck through.]~~
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

CHAPTER 185
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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Six

AN ACT relative to adjudicative proceedings where there is a council or board with jurisdiction.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 185:1 Criteria for Denial; Suspension or Revocation; Modification. Amend RSA 125-C:13, II and III to
2 read as follows:

3 II. The commissioner may suspend or revoke any permit or authorization issued hereunder if[,
4 following a hearing,] the commissioner determines:

5 (a) That the permit holder or registrant has committed a violation of this chapter or any rule,
6 order, or permit conditions in force and applicable to it; or

7 (b) That emissions from the device or non-Title V source to which the permit applies, alone or
8 in conjunction with other sources of the same pollutants, presents an immediate danger to the public
9 health.

10 III. The commissioner may order modification of any source of air pollution holding a valid permit
11 issued under this chapter in the event that the commissioner determines[, following a hearing]:

12 (a) That the device or non-Title V source to which the permit applies fails to meet existing
13 emission limits established by state or federal rule or regulation;

14 (b) That the device or non-Title V source is resulting or is reasonably likely to result in a
15 violation of an air quality standard in force.

16 185:2 Enforcement. Amend RSA 125-C:15, I-b to read as follows:

17 I-b. The commissioner of the department of environmental services~~[, after notice and hearing~~
18 ~~pursuant to RSA 541-A,]~~ may impose an administrative fine not to exceed \$4,000 for each offense upon
19 any person who violates any provision of this chapter, any rule adopted pursuant to this chapter, or any
20 permit, compliance schedule, stop use order, or order of abatement, issued pursuant to this chapter; or
21 upon any person who makes or certifies a material false statement relative to any document or
22 information which is required to be submitted to the department pursuant to this chapter or any rule
23 adopted pursuant to this chapter. ~~[Rehearings and appeals from a decision of the commissioner under~~
24 ~~this paragraph shall be in accordance with RSA 541.]~~ Any administrative fine imposed under this
25 paragraph shall not preclude the imposition of further penalties under this chapter. The proceeds of
26 administrative fines imposed pursuant to this paragraph shall be deposited in the general fund.

27 (a) ***Appeals from a decision of the commissioner under this paragraph shall be in accordance***
28 ***with RSA 21-O:11, IV*** ~~[Notice and hearing prior to the imposition of an administrative fine shall be in~~
29 ~~accordance with RSA 541-A and procedural rules adopted by the commissioner pursuant to RSA 541-~~
30 ~~A:16].~~

31 (b) The commissioner shall determine fines based on the following:

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(1) For a minor deviation from a requirement causing minor potential for harm, the fine shall be not less than \$100 and not more than \$2,000.

(2) For a minor deviation from a requirement causing moderate potential for harm, the fine shall be not less than \$601 and not more than \$2,500.

(3) For a minor deviation from a requirement causing major potential for harm, the fine shall be not less than \$851 and not more than \$3,000.

(4) For a moderate deviation from a requirement causing minor potential for harm, the fine shall be not less than \$601 and not more than \$2,500.

(5) For a moderate deviation from a requirement causing moderate potential for harm, the fine shall be not less than \$851 and not more than \$3,000.

(6) For a moderate deviation from a requirement causing major potential for harm, the fine shall be not less than \$1,251 and not more than \$3,500.

(7) For a major deviation from a requirement causing minor potential for harm, the fine shall be not less than \$851 and not more than \$3,000.

(8) For a major deviation from a requirement causing moderate potential for harm, the fine shall be not less than \$1,251 and not more than \$3,500.

(9) For a major deviation from a requirement causing major potential for harm, the fine shall be not less than \$1,501 and not more than \$4,000.

(c) The commissioner may assess an additional fine for repeat violations.

(d) Each day of violation shall constitute a separate offense.

185:3 Administrative Fines. Amend RSA 125-D:4 to read as follows:

125-D:4 Administrative Fines.

The commissioner of the department of environmental services~~[, after notice and hearing pursuant to RSA 541-A,]~~ may impose an administrative fine not to exceed \$4,000 for each offense upon any person who violates any provision of this chapter, any rule adopted pursuant to this chapter, or any permit or order issued pursuant to this chapter; or upon any person who makes or certifies a material false statement relative to any document or information which is required to be submitted to the department pursuant to this chapter or any rule adopted pursuant to this chapter. ~~[Rehearings and appeals from a decision of the commissioner under this section shall be in accordance with RSA 541.]~~ Any administrative fine imposed under this section shall not preclude the imposition of further penalties under this chapter. The proceeds of administrative fines imposed pursuant to this section shall be deposited in the general fund.

I. *Appeals from a decision of the commissioner under this paragraph shall be in accordance with RSA 21-O:11, IV* ~~[Notice and hearing prior to the imposition of an administrative fine shall be in accordance with RSA 541-A and procedural rules adopted by the commissioner pursuant to RSA 541-A:16].~~

II. The commissioner shall determine fines in accordance with RSA 125-C:15, I-b(b) and (d).

III. The commissioner may assess an additional fine for repeat violations.

185:4 Administrative Fines. Amend RSA 125-I:3-a to read as follows:

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125-I:3-a Administrative Fines.

The commissioner of the department of environmental services~~[, after notice and hearing pursuant to RSA 541-A,]~~ may impose an administrative fine not to exceed \$4,000 for each offense upon any person who violates any provision of this chapter, any rule adopted pursuant to this chapter, or any permit or order issued pursuant to this chapter; or upon any person who makes or certifies a material false statement relative to any document or information which is required to be submitted to the department pursuant to this chapter or any rule adopted pursuant to this chapter. ~~[Rehearings and appeals from a decision of the commissioner under this section shall be in accordance with RSA 541.]~~ Any administrative fine imposed under this section shall not preclude the imposition of further penalties under this chapter. The proceeds of administrative fines imposed pursuant to this section shall be deposited in the general fund.

I. *Appeals from a decision of the commissioner under this section shall be in accordance with RSA 21-O:11, IV* ~~[Notice and hearing prior to the imposition of an administrative fine shall be in accordance with RSA 541-A and procedural rules adopted by the commissioner pursuant to RSA 541-A:16].~~

II. The commissioner shall determine fines in accordance with RSA 125-C:15, I-b(b) and (d).

III. The commissioner may assess an additional fine for repeat violations.

185:5 Enforcement. Amend RSA 125-J:8, I-a to read as follows:

I-a. The commissioner of the department of environmental services~~[, after notice and hearing pursuant to RSA 541-A,]~~ may impose an administrative fine not to exceed \$2,000 for each offense upon any person who violates any provision of this chapter, any rule adopted pursuant to this chapter, or any permit, compliance schedule, stop use order, or order of abatement issued pursuant to this chapter; or upon any person who makes or certifies a material false statement relative to any document or information which is required to be submitted to the department pursuant to this chapter or any rule adopted pursuant to this chapter. ~~[Rehearings and appeals from a decision of the commissioner under this paragraph shall be in accordance with RSA 541.]~~ Any administrative fine imposed under this paragraph shall not preclude the imposition of further penalties under this chapter. The proceeds of administrative fines imposed pursuant to this paragraph shall be deposited in the general fund.

(a) *Appeals from a decision of the commissioner under this paragraph shall be in accordance with RSA 21-O:11, IV* ~~[Notice and hearing prior to the imposition of an administrative fine shall be in accordance with RSA 541-A and procedural rules adopted by the commissioner pursuant to RSA 541-A:16].~~

(b) The commissioner shall determine fines in accordance with RSA 125-C:15, I-b(b).

(c) The commissioner may assess an additional fine for repeat violations.

185:6 Administrative Fines; Asbestos Management Control. Amend RSA 141-E:16 to read as follows:

141-E:16 Administrative Fines.

I.(a) The commissioner~~[, after notice and hearing pursuant to RSA 541-A,]~~ may impose an administrative fine not to exceed \$4,000 for each offense upon any person who violates any provision of

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RSA 141-E:3 or any rule adopted by the commissioner under this chapter; or upon any person who makes or certifies a material false statement relative to any document or information which is required to be submitted to the department pursuant to this chapter or any rule adopted pursuant to this chapter. ~~[Rehearings and appeals from a decision of the commissioner under this paragraph shall be in accordance with RSA 541-]~~ Any administrative fine imposed under this paragraph shall not preclude the imposition of further penalties under this chapter. The proceeds of administrative fines levied pursuant to this section shall be deposited in the fund established by RSA 141-E:12, II.

(b) *Appeals from a decision of the commissioner under this paragraph shall be in accordance with RSA 21-O:11, IV* ~~[Notice and hearing prior to the imposition of an administrative fine shall be in accordance with RSA 541-A and procedural rules adopted by the commissioner pursuant to RSA 541-A:16].~~

(c) The commissioner shall determine fines in accordance with RSA 125-C:15, I-b(b) and (d).

(d) The commissioner may assess an additional fine for repeat violations.

II. Whenever a person licensed pursuant to RSA 141-E:10 or certified pursuant to RSA 141-E:11 fails to pay an administrative fine as required by this section, the commissioner~~[, after notice and hearing pursuant to rules adopted under RSA 541-A,]~~ may deny, suspend, or revoke the license or certificate or may issue an appropriate order.

185:7 Administrative Fines; Waste Management Division. Amend RSA 146-A:15, I to read as follows:

I. The commissioner of the department of environmental services~~[, after notice and hearing pursuant to RSA 541-A,]~~ may impose an administrative fine not to exceed \$4,000 for each offense upon any person who violates any provision of this chapter including any rule adopted under the provisions of this chapter or any order or permit issued under this chapter. Each day of the violation shall constitute a separate offense. ~~[Rehearings and appeals]~~ *Appeals* from a decision of the commissioner under this paragraph shall be in accordance with ~~[RSA 541]~~ *RSA 21-O:9, V*. Any administrative fine imposed under this section shall not preclude the imposition of further penalties under this chapter. The commissioner shall adopt rules, under RSA 541-A, relative to[:

(a) ~~A]~~ *a* schedule of administrative fines which may be imposed under this section for violations as provided in paragraph I.

~~[(b) Procedures for notice and hearing prior to the imposition of an administrative fine.]~~

185:8 Underground Storage Facility Permit Required. Amend RSA 146-C:4, I to read as follows:

I. No person shall own or operate an underground storage facility in this state without a permit issued by the department. The permit to operate may be revoked ~~[in accordance with RSA 541-A:30]~~ for just cause, including, but not limited to, the operation or ownership of an underground storage facility in violation of the department's rules. The revocation shall not take effect until the owner or operator has had an opportunity to be heard by the council, provided such request is made within 20 days of the issuance of the department's decision to revoke the permit. Appeal of a decision revoking a permit to operate shall be governed by RSA 21-O:14. Any appeal brought pursuant to RSA 541 shall not stay a decision by the waste management council which affirms the department's revocation of a permit.

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1 185:9 Administrative Fines; Underground Storage Facilities. Amend RSA 146-C:10-a to read as
2 follows:

3 146-C:10-a Administrative Fines.

4 The commissioner of the department of environmental services~~[, after notice and hearing pursuant to~~
5 ~~RSA 541-A,]~~ may impose an administrative fine not to exceed \$2,000 for each offense upon any person
6 who violates any provision of this chapter including any rule adopted under the provisions of this chapter.
7 ~~[Rehearings and appeals]~~ ***Appeals*** from a decision of the commissioner under this section shall be in
8 accordance with ~~[RSA 541]~~ ***RSA 21-O:9, V.*** Any administrative fine imposed under this section shall not
9 preclude the imposition of further penalties under this chapter. The proceeds of administrative fines
10 levied pursuant to this section shall be deposited by the commissioner in the oil pollution control fund
11 established under RSA 146-A. The commissioner shall adopt rules, under RSA 541-A, relative to[:

12 ~~I. A]~~ ***a*** schedule of administrative fines which may be imposed under this section for violations of
13 this chapter as provided above ~~[- and~~

14 ~~II. Procedures for notice and hearing prior to the imposition of an administrative fine].~~

15 185:10 Administrative Fines; Hazardous Waste Management. Amend RSA 147-A:17-a, I to read as
16 follows:

17 I. The commissioner of the department of environmental services~~[, after notice and hearing~~
18 ~~pursuant to RSA 541-A,]~~ may impose an administrative fine not to exceed \$2,000 for each offense upon
19 any person who violates any provision of this chapter including any rule adopted under the provisions of
20 this chapter. ~~[Rehearings and appeals]~~ ***Appeals*** from a decision of the commissioner under this
21 paragraph shall be in accordance with ~~[RSA 541]~~ ***RSA 21-O:9, V.*** Any administrative fine imposed under
22 this section shall not preclude the imposition of further penalties under this chapter. The commissioner
23 shall adopt rules, under RSA 541-A, relative to[:

24 ~~(a) A]~~ ***a*** schedule of administrative fines which may be imposed under this paragraph for
25 violations of this chapter as provided above.

26 ~~[(b) Procedures for notice and hearing prior to the imposition of an administrative fine.]~~

27 185:11 Approval, Suspension, or Revocation. Amend the introductory paragraph of RSA 149-M:12, II
28 to read as follows:

29 II. The department may suspend or revoke any permit issued under this chapter if~~[, following an~~
30 ~~opportunity for hearing,]~~ it determines that:

31 185:12 Administrative Fines; Solid Waste Management. Amend RSA 149-M:16 to read as follows:

32 149-M:16 Administrative Fines.

33 The commissioner~~[, after notice and hearing pursuant to RSA 541-A,]~~ may impose an administrative
34 fine not to exceed \$2,000 for each offense upon any person who violates any provision of this chapter,
35 including any rule adopted under the provisions of this chapter. ~~[Rehearings and appeals]~~ ***Appeals*** from a
36 decision of the commissioner under this section shall be in accordance with ~~[RSA 541]~~ ***RSA 21-O:9, V.***
37 Any administrative fine imposed under this section shall not preclude the imposition of further penalties
38 under this chapter. The commissioner shall adopt rules, under RSA 541-A, relative to[:

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1 I-A] a schedule of administrative fines which may be imposed under this section for violations of
2 this chapter as provided above.

3 [~~H. Procedures for notice and hearing prior to the imposition of an administrative fine.~~]

4 185:13 Enforcement; Solid Waste Management. Amend RSA 149-M:38, VI to read as follows:

5 VI. The commissioner~~[, after notice and hearing pursuant to RSA 541-A,]~~ may impose an
6 administrative fine not to exceed \$2,000 for each violation upon any person who violates any provision of
7 this subdivision, any rule adopted under this subdivision, any condition in any exemption granted under
8 this subdivision, or any order issued pursuant to this subdivision or who makes or certifies a material false
9 statement relative to any certificate of compliance required by this subdivision. ~~[Rehearings and appeals]~~
10 **Appeals** from a decision of the commissioner under this paragraph shall be in accordance with ~~[RSA 541]~~
11 **RSA 21-O:9, V**. Any administrative fine imposed under this paragraph shall not preclude the imposition of
12 other penalties under this chapter.

13 185:14 Revocation or Suspension of Certificate; Water Division. Amend RSA 332-E:9, I to read as
14 follows:

15 I. If the department receives information which indicates that good cause exists to suspend or
16 revoke the certificate of an individual operator, the department shall ~~[proceed to]~~ suspend or revoke the
17 certificate in accordance ~~[with RSA 541-A:30]~~.

18 185:15 Penalties; Water Division. Amend RSA 482:89, V to read as follows:

19 V. The commissioner~~[, after notice and hearing pursuant to RSA 541-A,]~~ may impose upon any
20 person who violates any provision of this chapter, as specified in paragraph I, an administrative fine not to
21 exceed \$2,000 for each violation in addition to other remedies and penalties provided under this chapter.
22 ~~[The department shall commence a proceeding under this paragraph against any person who does not~~
23 ~~respond within 45 days of receipt of a written order, directive, or any notice of needed maintenance,~~
24 ~~repair, or reconstruction issued by the department. Rehearings and appeals]~~ **Appeals** under this
25 paragraph shall be in accordance with ~~[RSA 541]~~ **RSA 21-O:7, IV**. The commissioner shall adopt rules,
26 under RSA 541-A, relative to:

27 (a) A schedule of administrative fines which may be imposed under this paragraph for
28 violation of this chapter as specified in paragraph I; and

29 (b) Procedures for notice and hearing prior to the imposition of an administrative fine.

30 185:16 Refusal; Revocation; Suspension; Disciplinary Action; Water Division. Amend RSA 482-B:8
31 to read as follows:

32 482-B:8 Refusal; Revocation; Suspension~~[; Disciplinary Action]~~.

33 ~~[I.]~~ A license may be refused, or a license duly issued may be suspended or revoked, or the renewal
34 of such license refused by the board on the board's own investigation and motion or upon motion or
35 written complaint of an interested party if the board has good and sufficient reason to believe or finds that
36 the applicant for or the holder of such a license has:

37 ~~[(a)]~~ I. Made a material misstatement in the application for a license or any application for
38 renewal of such license.

39 ~~[(b)]~~ II. Obtained the license through willful fraud or misrepresentation.

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1 [(e)] *III.* Demonstrated incompetency to act as a water well contractor or pump installer as
2 determined by the water well board.

3 [(d)] *IV.* Been guilty of willful failure to comply with the provisions of this chapter or rules adopted
4 under RSA 482-B:4.

5 [(e)] *V.* Refused to file reports as required under RSA 482-B:10.

6 [(f)] *VI.* Been found guilty, by the board or by a court of competent jurisdiction of any fraud, deceit,
7 gross negligence, incompetence, or misconduct in the industry, operations, or business of water well
8 construction or pump installations.

9 ~~[(H.) The department may undertake one or more of the following disciplinary actions upon the~~
10 ~~department's own investigation and motion or upon written complaint and motion of an interested party if~~
11 ~~the department has good and sufficient reason to believe or finds that the applicant for or the holder of~~
12 ~~such a license has violated the provisions of RSA 482-B and the rules of the board:~~

13 ~~(a) Written reprimand.~~

14 ~~(b) Administrative order.~~

15 ~~(c) Administrative fine.~~

16 ~~(d) Requiring the licensee to participate in a program of continuing education in the area or~~
17 ~~areas in which the licensee has been found deficient.]~~

18 185:17 Hearing; Water Division. Amend RSA 482-B:9 to read as follows:

19 482-B:9 Hearing.

20 I. Before taking any action under RSA 482-B:8, the board [or department] shall give notice of its
21 intention to do so by certified mail to the person against whom the proposed action is to be taken. Upon
22 receipt of such notice, the person affected may within 30 days request a hearing. If a hearing is
23 requested, the board [or department] shall not act until such hearing is completed.

24 II. Hearings held by the board shall be held in the county in which the person affected has his or
25 her place of business or in the office of the board, whichever the board may decide. At least 10 days prior
26 to the date of hearing, the board shall send written notice of the time and place of such hearing to the
27 applicant for, or holder of, such license by certified mail to the last known address of such person. The
28 testimony presented and the proceedings of such hearing shall be recorded and preserved as the records
29 of the board. The board shall as soon after the hearing as possible, and not later than 90 days after the
30 date of such hearing, make its findings and determination on the license and shall send a copy of its
31 decision to each interested party by certified mail return receipt requested or by personal service.
32 Revocation or suspension of a license shall be effective upon receipt of such board decision.

33 III. Appeal from a decision of the board may be made in accordance with RSA 541.

34 ~~[(IV.) Hearings held by the department shall be held in accordance with the rules of practice and~~
35 ~~procedure of the department.]~~

36 185:18 Enforcement and Penalties; Water Division. Amend RSA 482-B:16, II to read as follows:

37 II. The commissioner[, after notice and hearing pursuant to RSA 541-A,] may impose an
38 administrative fine not to exceed \$2,000 for each offense upon any person who violates any provision of
39 this chapter, any rule adopted under this chapter, or any license or approval issued under this chapter, or

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who makes or certifies a material false statement relative to any document required by this chapter. The person may appeal the decision to the board within 30 days of the date of the decision. Following an appeal hearing, the board may uphold or overturn the decision or impose a lesser or greater fine. Rehearings and appeals from a decision of the board under this paragraph shall be in accordance with RSA 541. Any administrative fine imposed under this section shall not preclude the imposition of further penalties under this chapter. The commissioner shall adopt rules subject to the approval of the water well board, under RSA 541-A, relative to[:

(a) ~~A] a~~ schedule of administrative fines which may be imposed under this paragraph[; and

(b) ~~Procedures for notice and hearing prior to the imposition of an administrative fine].~~

185:19 Establishment of Protected Instream Flows; Water Division. Amend RSA 483:9-c, X to read as follows:

X. Any party who is aggrieved by a determination establishing such protected instream flows may ~~[petition the commissioner for a hearing to review]~~ *appeal* such determination *pursuant to RSA 21-O:7, IV* within 30 days of the date the determination is issued. ~~[The filing of such petition shall stay the implementation of the determination until a final decision has been rendered on the petition or an appeal taken pursuant to RSA 541.]~~

185:20 Enforcement and Penalties; Water Division. RSA 485:58, I is repealed and reenacted to read as follows:

I. The department may issue an administrative order to any person who violates any provision of this chapter, any rule adopted under this chapter, or any license or approval issued under this chapter or who makes or certifies a material false statement relative to any document required by this chapter. The department may order the person to cease and desist from the violation and may require such corrective measures as are necessary to correct the violation. Appeals from a decision of the department shall be in accordance with RSA 21-O. The superior court shall place any action filed by the department to enforce an order under this section at the top of its calendar of cases and shall provide an expeditious hearing on such order.

185:21 Enforcement and Penalties; Water Division. Amend RSA 485:58, V to read as follows:

V. The commissioner of environmental services~~[; after notice and hearing pursuant to RSA 541-A;]~~ may impose an administrative fine not to exceed \$4,000 for each offense upon any person who violates any provision of this chapter including any rule adopted under the provisions of this chapter or any order or permit issued under this chapter. Each day of violation shall constitute a separate offense. ~~[Rehearings and appeals]~~ *Appeals* from a decision of the commissioner under this paragraph shall be in accordance with ~~[RSA 541]~~ *RSA 21-O:7, IV*. Any administrative fine imposed under this section shall not preclude the imposition of further penalties under this chapter. The proceeds of administrative fines levied pursuant to this paragraph shall be deposited by the department in the general fund. The commissioner shall adopt rules, under RSA 541-A, relative to[:

(a) ~~A] a~~ schedule of administrative fines which may be imposed under this paragraph for violations of this chapter as provided above.

~~[(b) Procedures for notice and hearing prior to the imposition of an administrative fine.]~~

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185:22 Application; Special Fund; Water Division. Amend RSA 485-A:7-a, I to read as follows:

I. Any operator of a wastewater treatment plant seeking certification or to increase his level of certification shall file an application with the ~~[certification committee]~~ **department** at least 6 weeks prior to the next examination date on a form provided by the department.

185:23 Issuance of Certificates; Water Division. Amend RSA 485-A:7-c to read as follows:

485-A:7-c Issuance of Certificates.

I. Upon satisfactory completion by an applicant of the established requirements, the department shall issue to the applicant a suitable certificate designating the applicant's competency. The certificate shall indicate the level of operation for which the operator is qualified. The certificate shall remain in effect ~~[for]~~ **until December 31 or June 30, but not more than** 2 years from the date of issuance.

II. Certificates shall be renewed biennially **and shall expire on the date printed on the certificate**. All renewal applications shall be accompanied by a \$100 renewal fee, which shall be deposited pursuant to RSA 485-A:7-a, II.

III. Certificates may be issued, upon payment of the \$100 fee, without examination, for a comparable classification to any person actively seeking employment in New Hampshire who holds a certificate issued by the appropriate certification agency of any federal, state, interstate, territorial, or other jurisdiction if, in the judgment of the ~~[certification committee]~~ **department**, the certification requirements of the jurisdiction granting such certification do not conflict with the department's rules and are not less stringent than rules adopted under this subdivision. The fee shall be deposited pursuant to RSA 485-A:7-a, II.

185:24 Penalties and Other Relief; Failure to Provide Facility; Water Division. Amend RSA 485-A:22, V to read as follows:

V. The commissioner of environmental services~~[, after notice and hearing pursuant to RSA 541-A:]~~ may impose an administrative fine not to exceed \$2,000 for each offense upon any person who violates any provision of this subdivision or, RSA 485-A:4-6, any rule adopted under this subdivision or RSA 485-A:4-6, or any permit issued under the authority of this subdivision or RSA 485-A:4-6. ~~[Rehearings and appeals]~~ **Appeals** from a decision of the commissioner under this paragraph shall be in accordance with ~~[RSA 541]~~ **RSA 21-O:7, IV**. Any administrative fine imposed under this section shall not preclude the imposition of further penalties under this chapter. The proceeds of administrative fines levied pursuant to this paragraph shall be deposited by the department in the general fund. The commissioner shall adopt rules, under RSA 541-A, relative to:

(a) ~~A]~~ **a** schedule of administrative fines which may be imposed under this paragraph for violations of this chapter, rules adopted under this chapter, and permits issued under this chapter, as provided above.

~~[(b) Procedures for notice and hearing prior to the imposition of an administrative fine.]~~

185:25 Penalty; Administrative Fines; Water Division. Amend RSA 485-A:28, II to read as follows:

II. The commissioner~~[, after notice and hearing,]~~ may impose an administrative fine not to exceed \$2,000 for each offense upon any person who violates any provision of this subdivision, any rule adopted under this subdivision, or any license or approval issued under this subdivision. ~~[Rehearings and appeals]~~

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1 ~~*Appeals*~~ from a decision of the commissioner under this paragraph shall be in accordance with [RSA 541:
2 *RSA 21-O:7, IV*. Any administrative fine imposed under this section shall not preclude the imposition of
3 further penalties under this chapter. The proceeds of administrative fines levied pursuant to this
4 paragraph shall be deposited in the general fund. The commissioner shall adopt rules, under RSA 541-A,
5 relative to:]

6 (a) ~~A] a~~ schedule of administrative fines which may be imposed under this paragraph[; and

7 (b) ~~Procedures for notice and hearing prior to the imposition of an administrative fine]~~.

8 185:26 Permit Eligibility; Exemption; Water Division. Amend RSA 485-A:35, I(a) to read as follows:

9 I.(a) All applications, plans, and specifications submitted in accordance with this chapter for
10 subsurface sewage or waste disposal systems shall be prepared and signed by the individual who is
11 directly responsible for them and who has a permit issued by the department to perform the work. The
12 department shall issue a permit to any individual who applies to the department, pays a fee of \$80, and
13 demonstrates a sound working knowledge of the procedures and practices required in the site evaluation,
14 design, and operation of subsurface sewage or waste disposal systems. The department shall require an
15 oral or written examination or both to determine who may qualify for a permit. Permits shall be issued
16 from January 1 and shall expire December 31 of every other year, subject to the grace periods specified in
17 subparagraphs (c) and (d). Permits shall be renewable upon proper application, payment of a biennial
18 permit fee of \$80, and documentation of compliance with the continuing education requirement of
19 subparagraph (b). A permit issued to any individual may be suspended, revoked or not renewed only for
20 just cause[and after the permit holder has had a full opportunity to be heard by the department]. An
21 appeal from a decision to revoke, suspend, or not renew a permit may be taken pursuant to [RSA 541:
22 *RSA 21-O:7, IV*. All fees shall be deposited in the subsurface systems fund established in RSA 485-A:30,
23 I-b.

24 185:27 System Installer Permit; Water Division. Amend RSA 485-A:36, I(a) to read as follows:

25 I.(a) No individual shall engage in the business of installing subsurface sewage or waste disposal
26 systems under this subdivision without first obtaining an installer's permit from the department. The
27 permit holder shall be responsible for installing the subsurface sewage or waste disposal system in strict
28 accordance with the approved plan. The department shall issue an installer's permit to any individual who
29 submits an application provided by the department, pays a fee of \$80 and demonstrates a sound working
30 knowledge of RSA 485-A:29-35 and the ability to read approved waste disposal plans. The department
31 shall require an oral or written examination or both to determine who may qualify for an installer's permit.
32 Permits shall be issued from January 1 and shall expire December 31 of every other year. Permits shall
33 be renewable upon proper application, payment of a biennial permit fee of \$80, and documentation of
34 compliance with the continuing education requirement of subparagraph (b). The installer's permit may be
35 suspended, revoked or not renewed for just cause, including, but not limited to, the installation of waste
36 disposal systems in violation of this subdivision or the refusal by a permit holder to correct defective work.
37 The department shall not suspend, revoke or refuse to renew a permit except for just cause[until the
38 permit holder has had an opportunity to be heard by the department]. An appeal from such decision to

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1 revoke, suspend or not renew a permit may be taken pursuant to RSA 21-O:14. All fees shall be
2 deposited in the subsurface systems fund established in RSA 485-A:30, I-b.

3 185:28 Reconsideration and Appeal Procedure; Water Division. Amend the introductory paragraph
4 of RSA 485-A:40 to read as follows:

5 If any person submitting plans and specifications to the department for its approval is aggrieved or
6 dissatisfied with its decision, he *or she* ~~[may file a motion for reconsideration and]~~ shall, *in addition to any*
7 *rights to appeal a department decision under RSA 21-O:14*, have a right of appeal from the decision of the
8 department in the following manner:

9 185:29 Reconsideration and Appeal Procedure; Water Division. Amend RSA 485-A:40, IV to read as
10 follows:

11 IV. Within 30 days ~~[after the application for reconsideration is denied, or if the application is~~
12 ~~granted, then within 30 days after the decision on such reconsideration]~~ *of the decision*, the applicant may
13 appeal by petition to the superior court.

14 185:30 Penalties; Water Division. Amend RSA 485-A:43, V to read as follows:

15 V. The commissioner of environmental services~~[- after notice and hearing pursuant to RSA 541-~~
16 ~~A.]~~ may impose an administrative fine not to exceed \$2,000 for each offense upon any person who
17 violates any provision of this subdivision including any rule adopted under the provisions of this chapter.
18 ~~[Rehearings and appeals]~~ *Appeals* from a decision of the commissioner under this paragraph shall be in
19 accordance with ~~[RSA 541]~~ *RSA 21-O:7, IV*. Any administrative fine imposed under this section shall not
20 preclude the imposition of further penalties under this subdivision. The proceeds of administrative fines
21 levied pursuant to this paragraph shall be deposited by the department in the general fund. The
22 commissioner shall adopt rules, under RSA 541-A, relative to:

23 ~~(a) A]~~ *a* schedule of administrative fines which may be imposed under this paragraph for
24 violations of this subdivision as provided above.

25 ~~[(b) Procedures for notice and hearing prior to the imposition of an administrative fine.]~~

26 185:31 Enforcement and Penalties; Water Division. Amend RSA 485-A:54, V to read as follows:

27 V. The commissioner of environmental services~~[- after notice and hearing pursuant to RSA 541-~~
28 ~~A.]~~ may impose an administrative fine not to exceed \$2,000 for each offense upon any person who
29 violates any provision of this subdivision, any rule adopted under this subdivision, or any permit or
30 contract entered into under the authority of this subdivision. ~~[Rehearings and appeals]~~ *Appeals* from a
31 decision of the commissioner under this paragraph shall be in accordance with ~~[RSA 541]~~ *RSA 21-O:7, IV*.
32 Any administrative fine imposed under this section shall not preclude the imposition of further penalties
33 under this subdivision. The proceeds of administrative fines levied pursuant to this paragraph shall be
34 deposited by the department in the replacement fund established pursuant to RSA 485-A:51. The
35 commissioner shall adopt rules, under RSA 541-A, relative to:

36 ~~(a) A]~~ *a* schedule of administrative fines which may be imposed under this paragraph for
37 violations of this chapter as provided above.

38 ~~[(b) Procedures for notice and hearing prior to the imposition of an administrative fine.]~~

39 185:32 Definitions; Director; Division; Water Division. Amend RSA 485-C:2, VI-VII to read as follows:

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VI. "Director" means the director of the division of water ~~[supply and pollution control]~~, department of environmental services.

VII. "Division" means the division of water ~~[supply and pollution control]~~, department of environmental services.

185:33 Administrative Fines; Water Division. Amend RSA 485-C:18 to read as follows:

485-C:18 Administrative Fines.

The commissioner~~[-after notice and hearing pursuant to RSA 541-A,]~~ may impose an administrative fine not to exceed \$4,000 for each offense upon any person who violates any provision of this chapter or any rule, permit or order adopted or issued under this chapter. Each day of violation shall constitute a separate offense. ~~[Rehearings and appeals]~~ ***Appeals*** from a decision of the commissioner under this section shall be in accordance with ~~[RSA 541]~~ ***RSA 21-O:7, IV***. Any administrative fine imposed under this section shall not preclude the imposition of further penalties under this chapter. The commissioner shall adopt rules, under RSA 541-A, relative to[:

~~I. A schedule of administrative fines which may be imposed under this section for violation of this chapter.~~

~~II. Procedures for notice and hearing prior to the imposition of an administrative fine.]~~ ***a schedule of administrative fines which may be imposed under this section for violation of this chapter.***

185:34 Administrative Fines; Water Division. Amend RSA 486-A:14, I to read as follows:

I. The commissioner of the department~~[-after notice and hearing pursuant to RSA 541-A,]~~ may impose an administrative fine not to exceed \$500 for each offense upon any person who violates the reporting requirement of RSA 486-A:7, II(e). ~~[Rehearings and appeals]~~ ***Appeals*** from a decision of the commissioner under this paragraph shall be in accordance with ~~[RSA 541]~~ ***21-O:7, IV***. The commissioner shall adopt rules, under RSA 541-A, relative to procedures for notice and hearing prior to the imposition of an administrative fine.

185:35 Penalty; Administrative Fines; Water Division. Amend RSA 487:7, II to read as follows:

II. The commissioner of environmental services~~[-after notice and hearing pursuant to RSA 541-A,]~~ may impose an administrative fine not to exceed \$2,000 for each offense, upon any person who violates any provision of this chapter, any lawful rule of the department adopted under this chapter, or any lawful order issued by the department pursuant to this chapter. ~~[Rehearings and appeals]~~ ***Appeals*** from a decision of the commissioner under this paragraph shall be in accordance with ~~[RSA 541]~~ ***RSA 21-O:7, IV***. Any administrative fine imposed under this section shall not preclude the imposition of further penalties under this chapter. The proceeds of administrative fines levied pursuant to this paragraph shall be deposited by the department in the general fund. The commissioner shall adopt rules, under RSA 541-A, relative to[:

~~(a) A]~~ ***a*** schedule of administrative fines which may be imposed under this paragraph for violations of this chapter.

~~[(b) Procedures for notice and hearing prior to the imposition of an administrative fine.]~~

185:36 Administrative Fines; Water Division. Amend RSA 488:8, I-II to read as follows:

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I. The commissioner~~[, after notice and hearing pursuant to RSA 541-A,]~~ may impose an administrative fine not to exceed \$4,000 for each offense upon any person who knowingly:

(a) Violates any provision of this chapter or any rule or order adopted or issued under it.

(b) Makes any material false statement in any document required to be filed or maintained.

(c) Renders inaccurate, falsifies, or tampers with any monitoring device or method.

II. ~~[Rehearings and appeals]~~ ***Appeals*** from a decision of the commissioner under this section shall be in accordance with ~~[RSA 541]~~ ***RSA 21-O:7, IV.***

185:37 Administration and Enforcement; Water Division. Amend RSA 489-C:5, III to read as follows:

III. The commissioner~~[, after notice and hearing pursuant to RSA 541-A,]~~ may revoke the certification of any person who violates this chapter. ~~[Rehearings and appeals]~~ ***Appeals*** relating to revocation shall be governed by ~~[RSA 541]~~ ***RSA 21-O:7, IV.***

185:38 Definitions; Division; Wetlands Council. Amend RSA 482-A:2, II to read as follows:

II. "Division" means the division of water ~~[resources]~~, department of environmental services.

185:39 Excavating and Dredging Permit; Certain Exemptions; Wetlands Council. Amend RSA 482-A:3, XIX to read as follows:

XIX. The department shall issue a culvert maintainer certificate to any individual who submits an application provided by the department, and has satisfactorily completed the program in accordance with paragraphs XVII and XVIII. Initial certificates shall be valid through December 31 of the year following the year of issue. Renewal certificates shall be valid from January 1 through December 31 of every other year. Permits shall be renewable upon proper application, and documentation of compliance with the continuing education requirement of paragraph XVIII. The installer's permit may be suspended, revoked, or not renewed for just cause, including, but not limited to, the installation of culverts in violation of this chapter or the refusal by a permit holder to correct defective work. The department shall not suspend, revoke, or refuse to renew a permit except for just cause ~~[until the permit holder has had an opportunity to be heard by the department]~~. An appeal from such decision to revoke, suspend, or not renew a permit may be taken pursuant to RSA 21-O:14.

185:40 Excavating and Dredging Permit; Certain Exemptions; Wetlands Council. Amend RSA 482-A:3, XX(c) to read as follows:

(c) The department may revoke a certificate for good cause after notification to the certificate holder ~~[and opportunity for an adjudicative proceeding under RSA 541-A:31 and rules adopted by the department]~~. ***An appeal from such decision to revoke, suspend, or not renew a permit may be taken pursuant to RSA 21-O:5-a, V.***

185:41 Administrative Fine; Wetlands Council. Amend RSA 482-A:13 to read as follows:

482-A:13 Administrative Fine.

The commissioner~~[, after notice and hearing in accordance with the procedures set forth in RSA 541-A,]~~ is empowered to impose an administrative fine of up to \$5,000 for each violation, irrespective of the duration of violation, upon any person who violates any provision of this chapter. This fine is appealable under ~~[RSA 541]~~ ***RSA 21-O:5-a, V.*** Any administrative fine imposed under this section will not preclude

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the imposition of further penalties under this chapter. The proceeds of administrative fines levied pursuant to this section shall be placed in the nonlapsing fund authorized in RSA 482-A:14, III.

185:42 Penalties; Wetlands Council. Amend RSA 483-B:18, III(b) to read as follows:

(b) The commissioner~~[, after notice and hearing pursuant to RSA 541-A,]~~ may impose an administrative fine of up to \$5,000 for each offense upon any person who violates this chapter. ~~[Rehearings and appeals]~~ ***Appeals*** relating to such fines shall be governed by ~~[RSA 541]~~ ***RSA 21-O:5-a***, V. Imposition of an administrative fine under this section shall not preclude the imposition of further civil penalties under this chapter.

185:43 Attorney General; Deputy Associates; Assistants. Amend RSA 21-M:3, VIII(a) to read as follows:

(a) ~~[Be an attorney qualified by education]~~ ***Have a minimum of a juris doctor degree from an accredited college or university*** and ***have*** experience in the conduct of administrative adjudicative hearings and the application of law to facts~~[, preferably a retired justice of the superior or supreme court];~~ and

185:44 Administrative Appeals. Amend RSA 21-O:14, I to read as follows:

I.(a) For purposes of this chapter, "department permitting decision" means:

(1) The department's final action on an application or other request for a license as defined in RSA 541-A:1, VIII, whether the action to accept, grant in whole or in part with or without conditions, or deny the application or request and whether the action is taken by the commissioner or by the department official who has statutory authority to take such final action or to whom the commissioner has properly delegated the authority to take such final action.

(2) ***The revocation of or the refusal to renew a license as defined in RSA 541-A:1, VIII based on the permit holder's non-compliance with the statute, rules, or terms and conditions of the license or on other good or just cause as defined in rules adopted relative to the license.***

(b) For purposes of this section, "department enforcement decision" means:

(1) The issuance of an administrative order issued under specific statutory authority for such an order, whether described as an order, an administrative order, a cease and desist order, a notice of violation and order of abatement, or other similar name, which specifies the facts and law that support the department's determination that one or more violations are occurring or have occurred and orders the recipient to cease on-going violations and to take such remediation actions as are necessary to come into compliance with applicable requirements.

(2) ~~[The revocation of or the refusal to renew a license as defined in RSA 541-A:1, VIII based on the permit holder's non-compliance with the statute, rules, or terms and conditions of the license or on other good or just cause as defined in rules adopted relative to the license.]~~ ***Imposition of an administrative fine, pursuant to specific statutory authority for such an administrative fine and any applicable administrative rules or schedules, by way of a notice of administrative fine or fines which specifies the facts and law that support the commissioner's determination that one or more violations are occurring or have occurred, which should be penalized with an appropriate administrative fine.***

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(c) "Department decision" means a department permitting decision[.]; a department enforcement decision, *including the commissioner's decision to impose an administrative fine*; and any other decision made by the department that is expressly appealable to a council under the statute granting authority to the department to make the decision. The term does not include rulemaking or an agency declaratory ruling as provided for in RSA 541-A.

185:45 New Paragraph; Agency Action Against Licensees. Amend RSA 541-A:30 by inserting after paragraph III the following new paragraph:

IV. An agency shall be exempt from the requirements in this chapter to provide for an adjudicative proceeding prior to making a final decision, if such final decision is subject to appeal to a council or board with jurisdiction over such agency, or divisions thereof, that provides for notice and an opportunity to be heard. Unless based on an immediate risk to human health or the environment, the agency decision under this paragraph shall not become effective for 30 days following the date of the decision or, if an appeal is filed to a council or board with jurisdiction, until the council or board issues a decision.

185:46 Emissions Reduction Trading Programs; Certification of Emissions Reduction Credits. Amend the introductory paragraph of RSA 125-J:4, VII to read as follows:

VII. The commissioner may suspend, modify, or revoke any emissions reduction credits certificate issued under this chapter, or any portion thereof, upon a finding[~~, following a hearing~~]:

185:47 New Paragraph; Department of Environmental Services; Administrative Appeals. Amend RSA 21-O:14 by inserting after paragraph IV the following new paragraph:

V. A fine imposed by the department shall not become effective for 30 days following the date of the decision, or if an appeal is filed to a council, until the council issues a decision.

185:48 Repeal. The following are repealed:

I. RSA 141-E:4, XIV, relative to procedures for notice and hearing concerning asbestos management and control.

II. RSA 149-M:7, XI, relative to procedures for notice and hearing concerning solid waste management.

III. RSA 149-M:37, IV, relative to procedures for notice and hearing concerning solid waste management.

IV. RSA 485-A:2, I-b, relative to the definition of certification committee.

V. RSA 485-A:40, I, relative to reconsideration of certain departmental decisions relative to sewage disposal systems.

VI. RSA 485-A:40, II, relative to certain appeals of certain departmental decisions relative to sewage disposal systems.

VII. RSA 485-A:40, III, relative to the granting of motions for reconsideration of certain departmental decisions relative to sewage disposal systems.

VIII. RSA 488:9, VI, relative to procedures for notice and hearing prior to the imposition of an administrative fine relative to water management.

IX. RSA 21-M:3, VIII-a, relative the appointment of hearing officers.

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- 1 X. RSA 125-O:7, III(a), relative to notice and hearing requirements prior to the imposition of
2 certain administrative fines.

185:49 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.

Approved: June 19, 2026

Effective Date: August 18, 2026