

**HB 526-FN - AS INTRODUCED**

2025 SESSION

25-0466

08/05

HOUSE BILL            ***526-FN***

AN ACT                establishing a climate change and damage division in the department of environmental services.

SPONSORS:            Rep. W. Thomas, Hills. 12

COMMITTEE:          Science, Technology and Energy

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ANALYSIS

This bill establishes a climate change and damage division within the department of environmental services, establishes a director of the division, and enumerates the duties thereof.

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Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

*In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty Five*

AN ACT                    establishing a climate change and damage division in the department of environmental services.

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

1            1 New Section; Division of Climate Change and Damage. Amend RSA 21-O by inserting after  
2 section 14 the following new section:

3            21-O:14-a Division of Climate Change and Damage. There is established within the department  
4 a division of climate change and damage under the supervision of an unclassified director of climate  
5 change and damage. The director of climate change and damage shall be nominated by the  
6 commissioner of the department of environmental services from a list of 3 candidates for appointed  
7 by the governor, with the consent of the council, and shall serve a term of 4 years until a successor is  
8 appointed. The director of climate change and damage shall be academically and technically  
9 qualified to hold the position. The director of climate change and damage shall be responsible for the  
10 following functions:

11            I. Adaptation planning, including:

12            (a) Conducting assessments to identify vulnerabilities to climate change impacts, such  
13 as sea-level rise, extreme weather events, and changing ecosystems.

14            (b) Developing plans to enhance resilience in communities, infrastructure, and natural  
15 systems against the effects of climate change.

16            (c) Collaborating with emergency management agencies to prepare for and respond to  
17 climate-related disasters.

18            II. Research and data analysis, including:

19            (a) Conducting climate modeling and scenario planning to forecast potential future  
20 climate conditions.

21            (b) Gathering and analyzing data on greenhouse gas emissions, temperature changes,  
22 and other relevant environmental indicators.

23            (c) Regularly monitoring climate change impacts and reporting findings to stakeholders,  
24 including government agencies and the public.

25            III. Public engagement and education, including:

26            (a) Leading awareness campaigns to educate citizens about climate change and  
27 encourage sustainable practices.

28            (b) Working with local communities to develop grassroots initiatives that address  
29 climate change at the local level.

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1                   (c) Engaging with businesses, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders  
2 to foster partnerships in climate action.

3                   IV. Funding and grants management, including:

4                   (a) Administering grant programs that fund climate change mitigation and adaptation  
5 projects.

6                   (b) Developing and managing incentive programs for businesses and individuals to adopt  
7 sustainable practices.

8                   (c) Allocation of resources effectively to support climate change initiatives within the  
9 department.

10                  2 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.

**HB 526-FN- FISCAL NOTE**  
**AS INTRODUCED**

AN ACT establishing a climate change and damage division in the department of environmental services.

**FISCAL IMPACT: This bill does not provide funding.**

<b>Estimated State Impact</b>				
	<b>FY 2025</b>	<b>FY 2026</b>	<b>FY 2027</b>	<b>FY 2028</b>
<b>Revenue</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<i>Revenue Fund(s)</i>	None			
<b>Expenditures*</b>	\$0	Indeterminable Increase in excess of \$822,000	Indeterminable Increase in excess of \$822,000	Indeterminable Increase in excess of \$822,000
<i>Funding Source(s)</i>	General Fund			
<b>Appropriations*</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<i>Funding Source(s)</i>	None			

\*Expenditure = Cost of bill

\*Appropriation = Authorized funding to cover cost of bill

**METHODOLOGY:**

This bill establishes a Climate Change and Damage Division within the Department of Environmental Services, appoints a Director for the Division, and outlines the Director's responsibilities.

The Department of Environmental Services (DES) states that, although they currently handle some of the listed functions in the bill, the majority of the research and data analysis tasks specified in Section II (a), (b), and (c) exceed their current staffing capabilities. Although the bill authorizes a Director for the Division, it does not provide funding for the position. DES estimates that an additional five staff members would be required to meet these requirements. However, these positions are neither authorized nor funded. The six total positions would include the Director of the Division, two environmental scientists, one economist, and two operations research analysts. The estimated cost to fund these positions is estimated to be \$822,000+ per fiscal year, which encompasses salaries, benefits, building rent, IT, equipment, phones, and other related expenses. For a detailed cost breakdown, refer to the table below.

**ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT PER FISC YEAR (ROUNDED)**

Director of Climate Change and Damage Division (1 position)	\$200,000
Environmental Scientist (2 positions)	\$249,000
Economist (1 position)	\$124,000
Operations Research Analyst (2 positions)	\$249,000
<b>Total Estimated Cost</b>	<b>\$822,000</b>

It is assumed that any fiscal impact would occur after FY 2025.

**AGENCIES CONTACTED:**

Department of Environmental Services