STATE OF NEW YORK

9676

IN ASSEMBLY

January 21, 2026

Introduced by M. of A. CASHMAN -- read once and referred to the Committee on Environmental Conservation

AN ACT to amend the environmental conservation law, in relation to authorizing the forest ranger force to establish a training program for volunteer wild land search and rescue personnel

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Subdivision 18 of section 9-0105 of the environmental conservation law, as added by chapter 617 of the laws of 1984, is amended to read as follows:

18. **a.** Establish, operate and maintain a search and rescue program in fire towns and fire districts of the state. For the purposes of this section fire towns shall mean such towns provided for in section 9-1107 of this chapter and fire districts shall be deemed to be the fire protection areas provided for in section 9-1109 of this chapter and regulations promulgated pursuant to the authority of such sections. Pursuant to such program the forest ranger force of the department shall have the authority to organize, direct and execute search operations for lost persons or civilian aircraft and conduct rescue operations for persons injured or in serious danger of injury in the wild, remote and forested areas of fire towns and fire districts of the state; provided that, where criminal conduct is suspected or fugitive search is involved such search or rescue operations shall be conducted under the jurisdiction of the appropriate law enforcement agency. Search and rescue operations outside of fire towns and fire districts may be conducted by the forest ranger force upon request of the agency conducting such operation.

b. Pursuant to such program, the forest ranger force of the department shall have the authority to establish, direct and maintain a program for the purpose of training and credentialing volunteer, wild land search and rescue personnel to assist and respond along with the forest ranger force to search for lost and missing persons in the wild, remote and forested areas of the state.

§ 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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