

# STATE OF NEW YORK

8486

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

## IN SENATE

August 22, 2025

Introduced by Sen. MAY -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Rules

AN ACT to amend the public health law, in relation to enacting the drinking water protection act

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

1 Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as  
2 the "drinking water protection act".

3 § 2. The section heading of section 1100 of the public health law is  
4 amended and a new subdivision 6 is added to read as follows:

5 [~~Rules~~] Watershed rules and regulations [~~of the department~~]; adoption  
6 and enforcement.

7 6. (a) A supplier may draft watershed rules and regulations. After  
8 notice and hearing the department of health may approve, modify, or  
9 promulgate such rules, which shall have the force of law when filed with  
10 the department and published as required.

11 (b) As used in this subdivision, the following terms shall have the  
12 following meanings:

13 (i) "Watershed" means all land that drains to a drinking water source  
14 used by a supplier.

15 (ii) "Watershed rule and regulation" means a locally applicable enact-  
16 ment adopted or approved under this section that governs land use,  
17 activities, or discharges within the drainage area of a public drinking  
18 water source for the purpose of preventing contamination or otherwise  
19 protecting water quality.

20 (iii) "Emerging contaminant" means, but shall not be limited to, per-  
21 and polyfluoroalkyl substances, pharmaceuticals, microplastics, and  
22 cyanotoxins.

23 (iv) "Supplier" means a city, village, authority, water district,  
24 jointly owned water-works, or any municipality or water-works corpo-  
25 ration supplying potable water.

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

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1 (c) A watershed rule and regulation may, at the discretion of the  
2 supplier and subject to approval by the department, address any matter  
3 reasonably related to protection of a public drinking water source,  
4 including but not limited to:

5 (i) delineation of intake or wellhead protection areas and activity  
6 restrictions therein;

7 (ii) reasonable standards for residential activities within the  
8 watershed, including limitations on fertilizer application and  
9 inspection, maintenance, repair or replacement of on-site wastewater  
10 treatment systems, where such activities occur within two hundred feet  
11 of a surface water body, watercourse, or wetland draining to a public  
12 drinking water intake or wellhead. Such standards may establish accepta-  
13 ble nutrient application rates, seasonal restrictions, and best manage-  
14 ment practices consistent with state guidance, and may require periodic  
15 inspection and pump-out of septic systems at intervals not to exceed  
16 five years;

17 (iii) management of nutrients, livestock access, and manure or ferti-  
18 lizer application to prevent impairments of public drinking water;

19 (iv) storm water, erosion control and post-construction run-off stand-  
20 ards consistent with state pollutant discharge elimination system  
21 permits;

22 (v) storage, handling or application of petroleum products, chloride  
23 salts, hazardous substances or emerging contaminants;

24 (vi) inspection, permitting and enforcement mechanisms, including  
25 record keeping, entry onto property at reasonable times, notices of  
26 violation, compliance schedules, stop-work orders and civil or adminis-  
27 trative penalties; and

28 (vii) public education, best management practice programs and any  
29 other measures reasonably related to preventing contamination of a  
30 public drinking water supply.

31 (d) Within one year after the effective date of this subdivision the  
32 department shall:

33 (i) issue an updated procedural manual describing the steps for draft-  
34 ing, reviewing and adopting watershed rules and regulations; and

35 (ii) publish on its website a model for the adoption of watershed  
36 rules and regulations, including sample policies and a process for  
37 engaging related stakeholders.

38 (e) (i) Any supplier whose existing watershed rules and regulations  
39 have not been updated since two thousand seventeen shall update their  
40 watershed rules and regulations no later than five years after this  
41 subdivision shall have taken effect or shall submit certification to the  
42 department that no such update is needed.

43 (ii) The department shall approve, modify or disapprove a draft within  
44 twelve months of receipt. The department's failure to act within that  
45 period constitutes approval.

46 (iii) If the department disapproves a draft, it shall state the  
47 required changes with specificity and shall act on a resubmission within  
48 six months.

49 (f) The department shall review each watershed rule and regulation at  
50 least once every ten years to determine whether revisions are needed  
51 considering new contaminants, climate impacts or advances in water qual-  
52 ity science.

53 (g) Before approving or adopting a watershed rule or regulation the  
54 department shall consult with the supplier, affected municipalities,  
55 soil and water conservation districts, agricultural organizations and

1 watershed advocacy groups and shall hold at least one public hearing  
2 within the watershed.

3 (h) The department, any supplier with an adopted watershed rule or  
4 regulation, or their authorized designee, may, at reasonable times and  
5 upon prior notice of at least twenty-four hours when practicable, enter  
6 non-residential property within the watershed for the limited purpose of  
7 inspecting for compliance with applicable watershed rules and regu-  
8 lations. Entry shall be limited to areas reasonably related to the  
9 inspection purposes and shall not include access to dwellings or curti-  
10 lage. Any designee shall be acting under the direct oversight of the  
11 department or supplier and shall be qualified to conduct such  
12 inspections.

13 (i) (i) The department or the attorney general may bring a civil  
14 action seeking a penalty of up to five hundred dollars for each day of  
15 violation of a watershed rule or regulation.

16 (ii) A watershed rule or regulation may authorize the supplier to  
17 assess and collect civil penalties for violations, provided that any  
18 such penalty shall not exceed five hundred dollars a day and shall be  
19 recoverable either in a civil action or through an administrative proc-  
20 ess established in the watershed rule or regulation.

21 (j) The supplier or suppliers or any municipality within the watershed  
22 has standing to seek judicial relief to compel the department to perform  
23 any non-discretionary duty imposed by this subdivision.

24 (k) The department shall submit an annual report to the governor, the  
25 temporary president of the senate, the speaker of the assembly, and the  
26 minority leaders of the senate and assembly that lists watershed rule  
27 and regulation adoptions or revisions completed during the prior year  
28 and summarizes enforcement actions and water quality trends.

29 (l) The department may adopt regulations necessary to implement and  
30 enforce this subdivision.

31 § 3. Severability clause. If any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivi-  
32 sion, section or part of this act shall be adjudged by any court of  
33 competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such judgment shall not affect,  
34 impair, or invalidate the remainder thereof, but shall be confined in  
35 its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section  
36 or part thereof directly involved in the controversy in which such judg-  
37 ment shall have been rendered. It is hereby declared to be the intent of  
38 the legislature that this act would have been enacted even if such  
39 invalid provisions had not been included herein.

40 § 4. This act shall take effect one year after it shall have become a  
41 law.