§ 15-0501. Protection of certain streams; disturbances of stream beds; permit.

1. Except as provided in subdivisions 4, 5, 6 and 7 of this section, no person or public corporation shall change, modify or disturb the course, channel or bed of any stream as defined in subdivision 2, or remove any sand, gravel or other material from the bed or banks of such a stream without a permit issued pursuant to subdivision 3 of this section.

2. For the purposes of this section, stream shall mean that portion of any fresh surface watercourse, except lakes or ponds having a surface area greater than ten acres at mean low water level, for which the department has adopted or may hereafter adopt pursuant to section 17-030l, any of the following classifications or standards:

AA and AA (T),

A and A (T),

B and B (T),

C (T)

Small ponds or lakes with a surface area at mean low water level of ten acres or less, located in the course of a stream, shall be considered a part of the stream and subject to regulation under this section.

3. Permit.

a. Before granting a permit, a permit renewal or a permit modification pursuant to this section, the department shall ascertain the probable effect on the health, safety and welfare of the people of the state, and the effect on the natural resources of the state, including soil, forests, water, fish and aquatic resources therein, likely to result from the proposed project or work.

b. In order to minimize the disturbance of a stream and in order to prevent unreasonable erosion of soil, increased turbidity of the waters, irregular variations in velocity, temperature and level of waters, the loss of fish and aquatic wildlife and the destruction of natural habitat thereof, and the danger of flood or pollution, the department shall review the permit application or request for renewal or modification of an existing permit and may approve the manner and the extent to which the stream bed or channel may be changed, altered or modified and may limit the quantity of sand, gravel or other material to be removed, designate the location in the bed, channel or banks of the stream from which the sand, gravel or other material may be removed, or it may deny the permit or request.

c. The rules and regulations adopted by the department to implement this section and the provisions of article 70 of this chapter and rules and regulations adopted thereunder shall govern the processing of permit applications, renewals, modifications, suspensions and revocations under this section.

4. No permit under this section shall be required of any local public corporation which has entered into a written memorandum of understanding with the department establishing the plan of operation to be followed in carrying out projects or work affecting water courses so as to afford proper protection to the public beneficial uses of such water courses.

5. No permit under this section shall be required of any state department or state public corporation. State departments and state public corporations may enter into a written memorandum of understanding with the department concerning projects or work of the type for which a permit would be required under this section if the project or work were undertaken by a person or local public corporation. The memorandum may establish procedures for review by the department of the plans for such projects or work and for written recommendations by the department with respect thereto.

6. No permit under this section shall be required for emergency work

in a stream or on its banks which is immediately necessary to protect the health, safety and well-being of any person or persons or to prevent damage to personal or real property, provided that the department is given written notification by registered mail or telegraph within forty-eight hours after the commencement of the work and within forty-eight hours following the completion of such work. Whenever emergency work is performed as provided in this subdivision, it shall be performed in a manner that will cause the least change, modification, disturbance or damage to the course or bed of the stream and its banks.

7. No permit under this section shall be required for certain agricultural activities of persons and corporations actively cultivating land devoted to agriculture whether or not the same be along a stream or watercourse as described in subdivision 2; providing that these agricultural activities consist only of crossing and recrossing of such streams or watercourses by livestock or by wheeled farm equipment normally used for traditional agricultural purposes; or the use of such stream or watercourse for withdrawal of water for irrigation where such withdrawal does not require altering the bed, banks or course of the stream in any manner.

8. The requirements of this section shall be in addition to those specified in section 15-0505 of this title, provided however, that the department may, by rule and regulation, provide that only one application for a permit or request for renewal or modification of an existing permit need be filed with the proposed project or work requires a department permit under this section and section 15-0505 of this title.