

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

CS/CS/HB 1405 — Biosolids

by Infrastructure Strategies Committee; Water Quality, Supply, and Treatment Subcommittee; and Rep. Tuck and others

The bill establishes a biosolids grant program within the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and provides that, subject to the appropriation of funds by the Legislature, DEP may provide grants to counties, special districts, and municipalities to support projects that:

- Evaluate and implement innovative technologies and solutions for the disposal of biosolids; or
- Construct, upgrade, expand, or retrofit domestic facilities that convert wastewater residuals to Class AA biosolids, nonfertilizer uses or disposal methods, or alternatives to synthetic fertilizers.

The bill encourages applicants to form public-private partnerships with private utilities and firms.

The bill provides that projects eligible for funding by the biosolids grant program may include, but are not limited to, projects that:

- Reduce the amount of nutrients in biosolids,
- Reduce the amount of emerging contaminants in biosolids, or
- Provide alternatives to the land application or landfilling of biosolids as a method of disposal.

The bill requires DEP, in allocating grant funds, to prioritize projects by considering the environmental benefit that a project may provide.

The bill requires DEP to administer the biosolids grant program so that 10 percent of the funds made available each year are reserved for projects within a rural area of opportunity. If DEP does not receive sufficient applications for projects within a rural area of opportunity, it may reallocate the reserved funds. DEP must require that each biosolids grant has a minimum of a 50 percent funding match from local, state, federal, or private funds. However, DEP may waive the funding match requirement for biosolids grants for projects within a rural area of opportunity.

The bill requires DEP to develop annual reporting requirements for grant recipients that must include the phosphorous and nitrogen content, the type, and the amount of each grant-funded product derived from wastewater residuals and the buyers and users of such products.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2023.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 106-0