

By Senator Collins

14-00422B-23

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to water and wastewater facility
3 operators; amending s. 403.865, F.S.; revising
4 legislative findings and intent; amending s. 403.867,
5 F.S.; conforming a provision to changes made by the
6 act; creating s. 403.8721, F.S.; requiring the
7 Department of Environmental Protection to issue water
8 treatment plant operator licenses, water distribution
9 system operator licenses, and domestic wastewater
10 treatment plant operator licenses by reciprocity to
11 certain applicants; providing licensure requirements;
12 authorizing the department to issue temporary operator
13 licenses during a declared state of emergency;
14 requiring the department to waive the application fee
15 for temporary operator licenses; providing an
16 effective date.

17
18 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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20 Section 1. Section 403.865, Florida Statutes, is amended to
21 read:

22 403.865 Water and wastewater facility personnel;
23 legislative purpose.—

24 (1) The Legislature finds that:

25 (a) Water and wastewater services are essential to the
26 health and well-being of all citizens.

27 (b) Water and wastewater facility personnel are essential
28 first responders.

29 (c) The threat to the public health and the environment

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30 from the operation of water and wastewater treatment plants and
31 water distribution systems mandates that qualified personnel
32 operate these facilities.

33 (2) It is the ~~legislative~~ intent of the Legislature that
34 any person who performs the duties of an operator and who falls
35 below minimum competency or who otherwise presents a danger to
36 the public be prohibited from operating a plant or system in
37 this state.

38 Section 2. Section 403.867, Florida Statutes, is amended to
39 read:

40 403.867 License required.—A person may not perform the
41 duties of an operator of a water treatment plant, water
42 distribution system, or a domestic wastewater treatment plant
43 unless he or she holds an active and valid operator ~~a current~~
44 ~~operator's~~ license issued by the department under s. 403.872 or
45 s. 403.8721.

46 Section 3. Section 403.8721, Florida Statutes, is created
47 to read:

48 403.8721 Requirements for licensure by reciprocity.—

49 (1) The department shall issue a license by reciprocity to
50 any applicant who meets all of the following requirements:

51 (a) Is a water treatment plant operator, water distribution
52 system operator, or domestic wastewater treatment plant operator
53 and holds an active and valid license from another state, the
54 Federal Government, a territory or tribal government that has
55 been designated as the primary agency by the United States
56 Environmental Protection Agency, or any unit thereof for which
57 the licensure requirements, including education and operational
58 experience, are comparable to or exceed the licensure

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59 requirements of s. 403.872.

60 (b) Has passed a licensure examination comparable to the
61 licensure examination of the department, subject to approval by
62 the department.

63 (c) Is not the subject of a disciplinary or enforcement
64 action outside this state at the time of application for
65 reciprocal licensure.

66 (d) Submits a completed application for reciprocal
67 licensure and any required supporting documentation.

68 (e) Remits the application fee.

69 (2) (a) The department shall issue a license by reciprocity
70 to any applicant who meets all of the following requirements:

71 1. Has performed duties comparable to a water treatment
72 plant operator, water distribution system operator, or domestic
73 wastewater treatment plant operator while serving in the United
74 States Armed Forces for which the requirements for performing
75 the duties, including education and operational experience, are
76 comparable to or exceed the licensure requirements of s.
77 403.872.

78 2. Has passed a skill assessment or competency examination
79 comparable to the licensure examination of the department,
80 subject to approval by the department.

81 3. Is not the subject of a disciplinary or enforcement
82 action at the time of application for reciprocal licensure.

83 4. Submits a completed application for reciprocal licensure
84 and any required supporting documentation.

85 5. Remits the application fee.

86 (b) If an applicant does not meet the requirements for
87 licensure under this subsection, the department shall award

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88 education and operational experience credits for licensure under
89 s. 403.872.

90 (3) During a declared state of emergency, the department:

91 (a) May issue a temporary water treatment plant operator
92 license, water distribution system operator license, or domestic
93 wastewater treatment plant operator license by reciprocity to
94 any applicant who meets the requirements of subsection (1) or
95 subsection (2).

96 (b) Shall waive the application fee for a temporary
97 operator license under this subsection.

98 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2023.