

By the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources; and
Senator Collins

592-02767-23

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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.

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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) The department shall issue a license by reciprocity to
70 any applicant who has performed duties comparable to a water
71 treatment plant operator, water distribution system operator, or
72 domestic wastewater treatment plant operator while serving in
73 the United States Armed Forces for which the requirements for
74 performing the duties, including education and operational
75 experience, are comparable to or exceed the licensure
76 requirements of s. 403.872.

77 (a) Any person applying for a license by reciprocity under
78 this subsection must meet the following requirements:

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

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

84 3. Submits a completed application for reciprocal licensure
85 and any required supporting documentation.

86 4. Remits the application fee.

87 (b) If an applicant does not meet the requirements for

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88 licensure under paragraph (a), the department shall award
89 education and operational experience credits for licensure under
90 s. 403.872.

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

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

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

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