

# CS/CS/HB 23: Water and Wastewater Facility Operators

## Summary:

This bill, CS/CS/HB 23, relates to water and wastewater facility operators. It amends several sections of the Florida Statutes. The bill revises legislative findings and intent, provides definitions, and requires the Department of Environmental Protection to issue water treatment plant operator licenses, water distribution system operator licenses, and domestic wastewater treatment plant operator licenses by reciprocity to certain applicants. It also authorizes the department to issue temporary operator licenses during a declared state of emergency and requires the department to waive the application fee for temporary operator licenses. The bill also includes provisions for licensure requirements and the adoption of rules by the department. The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2023.

Cons	Pros
1) This bill may lead to an influx of out-of-state operators with licenses issued by other states, potentially lowering the overall quality and standards of water and wastewater facility personnel in the state. 2) The provision for issuing temporary operator licenses during a state of emergency may undermine the need for trained and qualified personnel, potentially compromising public health and safety. 3) Waiving the application fee for temporary operator licenses could result in less rigorous screening and oversight of applicants, increasing the risk of unqualified individuals operating water and wastewater treatment plants.	1) This bill ensures that water and wastewater facility personnel are properly licensed and qualified to operate these facilities, which protects public health and the environment. 2) By allowing the Department of Environmental Protection to issue licenses by reciprocity, it streamlines the process for qualified individuals who hold licenses in other states or jurisdictions to work in Florida. 3) During a declared state of emergency, this bill allows for the issuance of temporary operator licenses, ensuring that essential water and wastewater services continue to be provided in times of crisis.