

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 various sections of the Florida Statutes to revise legislative findings and intent, provide definitions, and establish licensure requirements. The bill 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 allows for the issuance of temporary operator licenses during a declared state of emergency and requires the department to waive the application fee for these temporary licenses.

Cons	Pros
1) This bill may lead to a decrease in the quality of water and wastewater treatment facilities by allowing individuals with licenses from other states or entities to operate these facilities without meeting the same standards as required in Florida. 2) Granting temporary operator licenses during a declared state of emergency may pose a risk to public health and safety as individuals who do not meet the usual licensure requirements may be allowed to operate these critical facilities. 3) The waiver of application fees for temporary operator licenses may result in a loss of revenue for the Department of Environmental Protection, potentially hindering their ability to effectively regulate and oversee these facilities.	1) This bill aims to ensure that water and wastewater facilities are operated by qualified personnel, which will help protect public health and the environment. 2) By allowing for licensure by reciprocity, the bill facilitates the hiring of qualified operators from other states, territories, or tribal governments, ensuring that there is a pool of skilled professionals available to operate these essential facilities. 3) The provision for temporary operator licenses during a declared state of emergency ensures that there will be enough operators available to maintain the operation of water and wastewater facilities during critical situations, safeguarding access to clean water and sanitation services.