

Testimony for the House Committee on Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife

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H.554 does a few important things as it relates to public safety, emergency management, and hazard mitigation;

- Creation and maintenance of a comprehensive dam inventory

Being able to contact a dam owner in a timely manner, to either give actionable information or to receive a situational assessment of conditions at the dam, is a critical task the State Emergency Operations Center has been called upon to do in the past and will likely be called upon to do in the future. Currently, the statewide dam inventory has some data gaps in that non-jurisdictional dams are not updated on a formalized recurring basis. Having correct contact information for dam owners is an important piece of information the State Emergency Operations Center needs to have during a disaster.

- Creation of rulemaking authority for dam Emergency Action Plans (EAPs)

While all DEC-owned High Hazard dams currently have an Emergency Action Plan (EAP), DEC lacks the rulemaking authority to compel a dam owner to develop and maintain an Emergency Action Plan (EAP). An Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is a critical component of a dam owner's response to an emergency involving their dam and the starting point for local and regional emergency response planning, such as evacuation planning. An Emergency Action Plan (EAP) typically contains inundation modeling, which is the best predictive tool we have for knowing where the water is likely to go in the event of a dam breach. Knowing if the Red Cross shelter, an assisted living facility, or if the only road out of an area is within the dam's inundation area is an essential piece of information that must guide planning efforts before a disaster occurs.

- Creation of the requirement that the location of a dam on a property must be recorded in the land records of the municipality in which the dam is located

Currently, the location of a dam is not required to be recorded in the land records of the municipality where the dam is located. Ensuring that the location of a dam is recorded in the land records allows municipalities and their residents to access the information during important planning processes, such as development of local, regional and state hazard mitigation plans.