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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-FOURTH SESSION

H. F. No. 1355

02/24/2025 Authored by Baker, Koznick, Kotyza-Witthuhn, Her, Virnig and others

The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development Finance and Policy

03/13/2025 Adoption of Report: Amended and re-referred to the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy

1.1 A bill for an act

1.2 relating to occupational safety; requiring holders of permits to harvest or destroy
1.3 aquatic plants to safely use scuba diving equipment; establishing requirements for
1.4 commercial diving operations; amending Minnesota Statutes 2024, section
1.5 103G.615, subdivisions 1, 3; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes,
1.6 chapter 182.

1.7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.8 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 103G.615, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

1.9 Subdivision 1. **Issuance; validity.** (a) The commissioner may issue a state general permit
1.10 to a governmental subdivision or to the general public to conduct one or more projects
1.11 described in this subdivision. The commissioner may issue permits, with or without a fee,
1.12 to:

1.13 (1) gather or harvest aquatic plants, or plant parts, other than wild rice from public waters;

1.14 (2) transplant aquatic plants into public waters;

1.15 (3) destroy harmful or undesirable aquatic vegetation or organisms in public waters
1.16 under prescribed conditions to protect the waters, desirable species of fish, vegetation, other
1.17 forms of aquatic life, and the public.

1.18 (b) Application for a permit and a notification to request authorization to conduct a
1.19 project under a general permit must be accompanied by a fee, if required.

1.20 (c) An aquatic plant management permit is valid for one growing season and expires on
1.21 December 31 of the year it is issued unless the commissioner stipulates a different expiration
1.22 date in rule or in the permit.

(d) A general permit may authorize a project for more than one growing season.

(e) Before issuing a permit under this section:

(1) the commissioner must inquire whether the applicant will use scuba diving equipment during any activity authorized by the permit. If the applicant indicates that scuba diving equipment will be used, the commissioner must provide the applicant with the information sheet required under section 182.679, subdivision 5; and

(2) the applicant must provide documentation to the commissioner verifying that a third-party on-site hazard survey was completed in the last year by a qualified safety professional who observed the applicant's work using scuba diving equipment. The documentation must include a written report of the findings and recommendations to reduce the risk of injury or illness to employees that are scuba diving. The written report must include an evaluation of specific safety practices, equipment, and training. A qualified safety professional includes:

(i) a Department of Labor and Industry workplace safety and health consultant;

(ii) a workers' compensation insurance underwriter; or

(iii) a private consultant.

Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 103G.615, subdivision 3, is amended to read:

Subd. 3. **Permit standards.** (a) The commissioner shall, by rule, prescribe standards to issue and deny permits under this section. The standards must ensure that aquatic plant control is consistent with shoreland conservation ordinances, lake management plans and programs, and wild and scenic river plans.

(b) The commissioner may not issue or renew a permit under this section to any person who:

(1) has received one or more willful violations of an occupational safety and health standard adopted under chapter 182 involving scuba diving during the previous two years;
or

(2) has contested one or more willful violations of an occupational safety and health standard adopted under chapter 182 involving scuba diving during the pendency of a contested case.

(c) The commissioner may not issue or renew a permit under this section to a successor person. "Successor person" means a person that shares three or more of the following with the person who received or contested a violation under paragraph (b):

- 3.1 (1) has one or more of the same owners, members, principals, officers, or managers;
- 3.2 (2) performs similar work within the state of Minnesota;
- 3.3 (3) has one or more of the same telephone or fax numbers;
- 3.4 (4) has one or more of the same email addresses or websites;
- 3.5 (5) employs or engages substantially the same individuals to provide or perform services;
- 3.6 (6) uses substantially the same vehicles, facilities, or equipment; or
- 3.7 (7) lists or advertises substantially the same project experience and portfolio of work.

3.8 Sec. 3. **[182.679] COMMERCIAL DIVING OPERATIONS.**

3.9 Subdivision 1. **Application.** This section applies to individuals who are conducting

3.10 self-contained underwater breathing apparatus (scuba) diving at a place of employment

3.11 when making improvements to land, including the removal of aquatic plants.

3.12 Subd. 2. **Certification required for commercial diving operations.** No employer may

3.13 permit an individual subject to this section to conduct scuba diving unless the individual

3.14 has a valid open-water scuba diver certificate received from a nationally recognized and

3.15 accredited certification program or agency.

3.16 Subd. 3. **Equipment requirements.** An employer must require the use of a buoyancy

3.17 control device when an individual subject to this section is scuba diving.

3.18 Subd. 4. **Penalties.** An employer may be cited by the commissioner for violations of

3.19 subdivisions 2 and 3. Citations are punishable under section 182.666.

3.20 Subd. 5. **Information for employers.** The commissioner must develop an information

3.21 sheet for employers who have or intend to have one or more employees use scuba diving

3.22 equipment in the workplace. The information sheet must explain the requirements of this

3.23 section and include any applicable federal requirements for employers. The commissioner

3.24 must post the information sheet on the department's website. The commissioner must also

3.25 deliver the information sheet to the commissioner of natural resources to provide to

3.26 businesses according to section 103G.615, subdivision 1, paragraph (e).

3.27 Subd. 6. **Citation.** This section is the "Brady Aune and Joseph Anderson Safety Act."