

Forest Practices Advisory Board

March 5, 2025

Members present: Joan Nichols, Bruce Spaman, Brennan Sheahan, Jovan Bryan, Barbara Kelly, Ian Branson, Chris Martin

Absent: Dr. Mark Ashton, Dr. Jeff Ward

Guests: Allison Rau (DEEP Legal Staff), Nick Zito (DEEP Forestry), Thomas Trask (DEEP Forestry), Justin Davis (DEEP Bureau of Natural Resources) Sheila Hoefle (DEEP Forestry, recorder)

Review/approve notes from October 23, 2024 meeting - Brennan moved to approve, Barbara seconded. Unanimous vote to approve as written.

2025 Legislative Update – Chris shared the information found beginning on page 3.

Chris introduced Justin Davis, DEEP Bureau of Natural Resources – Bureau Chief. Justin thanked members and guests for their continued dedication to the Board and shared that he is interested to learn more about the Board. Board members had an opportunity to introduce themselves to Justin.

USDA Forest Service Skidder Bridge Grant Update—The program's purpose is to protect water resources and reduce water quality degradation during forestry-related operations requiring temporary water resource crossings. Funding has been granted to establish a temporary bridge rental program for portable skidder bridges, 16 timber bridges, and one pair of steel bridges. The program is currently on hold due to the current administration's review of federal funding.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service funding has experienced the IRA funding freeze. This will impact different forestry practices, consulting foresters and contractors.

EQIP funding is considered stable under the continuing resolution. The resolution extends funding levels from the prior year.

Best Management Practices Smart Phone Application Update – NIC CT has created a BMP app for CT modeled off of the VT AMP app. The app is available for download on Apple devices. Android devices are on hold pending updates from Google. Nick walked Board members through the app. Barbara asked about making sure that unique soil types to Connecticut are included.

Forest Practices Notification Form Update—CACWIC has agreed to review the form and will determine whether they endorse it. Time will be allotted at their November 2025 meeting for a presentation on the updated form.

Continuing Education Unit Discussion – Draft regulation updates have been developed that for CEU updates that mimic the Society of American Foresters. (see draft updates page 10). The Board discussed the importance of all levels of practitioners keeping up with CEUs and advised DEEP to move forward with adoption.

eLicensing Update – Nick continues to work with the Dept of Administrative Services to move Forest Practitioner Certification to the eLicensing platform. It is anticipated that the completion date will be June 1, 2025. After the move all forest practitioners will have an expiration date of either January 1 or July 1.

The new ID printer is active and Nick has begun providing new photo IDs to practitioners when their certification renews.

Forest Practices Advisory Board Vacancies – Dr. Jeff Ward has submitted his resignation from the Board after leaving CFPA. Once CFPA hires another forester, they will be discussed as a replacement for Jeff. Chris shared information about an individual who is interested in being on the Board filling the general public vacancy. The FPAB advised DEEP to move forward with filling the general public vacancy.

Enforcement Actions, Exams – Several enforcement actions are underway, CT River Valley State Park, Bloomfield Flood Control Area #3, Lamentation Mountain State Park, and Indian Wells State Park.

The next forest practitioner exam is scheduled for March 13; there are 7 applicants for Forester and 6 for Supervising Forest Products Harvester. Current active licenses: Forester – 143, Supervising Forest Products Harvester – 213, Forest Products Harvester – 26. A new Forester exam has been developed and will be used this year.

Municipal FPA Regs – Many of the municipal issues have been resolved. Two municipalities are writing their regulations, one is in the process of rescinding, and one is in the approval process.

Division of Forestry Staffing - Urban Community Forestry Volunteer Partnership Coordinator (EP Forester 2) position closed on 3/6, interviews will be scheduled for April. Filling this position will bring DEEP Forestry into compliance with the USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry program requirements contained within the Federal Consolidated Payment Grant.

Chris introduced Tom as the new Forest Protection Supervisor. Tom was previously employed in New Hampshire as a Ranger. Tom was on the job about 30-days when the Lamentation Mountain Fire started. Tom is focused on modernizing the Forest Protection Program.

Additional Items of Interest –

DEEP has modernized the Portland Sawmill. The sawmill produces products primarily used by DEEP. DEEP is attempting to sell the by-products. There was some concern regarding DEEP selling products and taking markets away from private mills. Chris emphasized although the mill is being modernized, production will remain focused on DEEP lumber needs and not increased to generate sales income hence not competing with the private market.

Joan will be heading to Washington DC at the end of March for the American Loggers Council meeting and to promote legislative agendas that align with their mission.

The TIMPRO annual meeting is scheduled for April 26.

The Society of American Foresters National Convention will be held in Hartford on October 22-25, 2025.

2025 Legislative Tracker – Forestry Related Bills

Updated 3/4/25

[2025HB-05004-R00-HB.DOCX](#) AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES AND ASSOCIATED JOB SECTORS.

Information on Underlying Bill: [HB05004 \(Chrome users: right click open in new tab\)](#)

Last Action: 1/8/2025 Referred to Joint Committee on ENV

Sponsors: Rep. Ritter, M. 001 ; Rep. Rojas, J. 009 ; Rep. Gresko, J. 121

Committees: *Environment Committee*

Statement of Purpose: To protect the state's environment while providing for the development of renewable energy sources and related job sectors in a manner that reduces costs connected with such protections and development

2/10/2025 (ENV) Vote to Draft, Public Hearing 3/3/25

[2025HB-05013-R00-HB.DOCX](#)

AN ACT ADDING CERTAIN PLANTS TO THE INVASIVE PLANTS LIST.

Information on Underlying Bill: [HB05013 \(Chrome users: right click open in new tab\)](#)

Last Action: 1/17/2025 Vote to Draft

Sponsors: Rep. Gresko, J. 121

Committees: *Environment Committee*

Statement of Purpose: To prohibit the sale, use and distribution of Japanese barberry and burning bush in the state

1/27/2025 Public Hearing 01/31

3/3/2025 (LCO) Filed with Legislative Commissioners' Office

DEEP Testimony supports. Prohibits Norway Maple on or after October 1, 2030.

[2025HB-05527-R00-HB.DOCX](#) AN ACT CONCERNING THE DESIGNATION OF A NEW STATE PARK OR FOREST IN THE CITY OF MIDDLETOWN.

Information on Underlying Bill: [HB05527 \(Chrome users: right click open in new tab\)](#)

Last Action: 1/21/2025 Referred to Joint Committee on ENV

Sponsors: Rep. Chafee, B. 033 ; Sen. Hochadel, J. S13 ; Sen. Lesser, M. S09

Committees: Environment Committee

Statement of Purpose: To provide for the conversion of state owned open space in the city of Middletown into a state park or forest

1/21/2025

Referred to Joint Committee on Environment

[2025HB-05925-R00-HB.DOCX](#) AN ACT PROHIBITING THE CLEARING OF FOREST LAND FOR GRID-SCALE SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC PROJECTS.

Information on Underlying Bill: [HB05925 \(Chrome users: right click open in new tab\)](#)

Last Action: 1/22/2025 Referred to Joint Committee on ET

Sponsors: Rep. Mushinsky, M. 085

Committees: Energy and Technology Committee

Statement of Purpose: To (1) prohibit the clearing of such land for the purpose of developing grid-scale solar photovoltaic projects, and (2) encourage the siting of such projects on canopies, roofs, brownfields or on existing developed land uses

1/22/2025

Referred to Joint Committee on Energy and Technology

[2025HB-05992-R00-HB.DOCX](#) AN ACT AUTHORIZING BONDS OF THE STATE FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF A BRIDGE IN THE NATCHAUG STATE FOREST.

Information on Underlying Bill: [HB05992 \(Chrome users: right click open in new tab\)](#)

Last Action: 1/22/2025 Referred to Joint Committee on FIN

Sponsors: *Rep. Boyd, P. 050*

Committees: *Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee*

Statement of Purpose: To provide funding to replace a bridge in the Natchaug State Forest in the town of Eastford

Date	Action Taken
1/22/2025	Referred to Joint Committee on Finance, Revenue and Bonding

[2025HB-06169-R00-HB.DOCX](#) AN ACT CONCERNING A PROPERTY OWNER'S LIABILITY FOR EXPENSES INCURRED AS A RESULT OF A FALLING TREE OR TREE LIMB.

Information on Underlying Bill: [HB06169 \(Chrome users: right click open in new tab\)](#)

Last Action: 1/22/2025 Referred to Joint Committee on JUD

Sponsors: *Rep. Osborne, M. 016*

Committees: *Judiciary Committee*

Statement of Purpose: To incentivize the responsible stewardship of trees on privately owned real property and protect neighboring property and occupants.

1/22/2025	Referred to Joint Committee on Judiciary
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[2025HB-06232-R00-HB.DOCX](#) AN ACT AUTHORIZING MUNICIPALITIES TO REGULATE TREE CUTTING ON ALL PROPERTIES.

Information on Underlying Bill: [HB06232 \(Chrome users: right click open in new tab\)](#)

Last Action: 1/23/2025 Referred to Joint Committee on ENV

Sponsors: *Rep. Meskers, S. 150*

Committees: *Environment Committee*

Statement of Purpose: To allow municipalities to regulate all tree cutting in the municipality for oversight and restoration of the tree canopy

1/23/2025	Referred to Joint Committee on Environment
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[2025HB-06261-R00-HB.DOCX](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING OLD-GROWTH FORESTS IN THE STATE.

Information on Underlying Bill: [HB06261 \(Chrome users: right click open in new tab\)](#)

Last Action: 1/23/2025 Referred to Joint Committee on ENV

Sponsors: Rep. Osborne, M. 016

Committees: Environment Committee

Statement of Purpose: To define "mature and old-growth forests" in the state so such forests can be inventoried for the purposes of being able to plan prospectively to protect this environmentally crucial component of the ecosystem

1/23/2025

Referred to Joint Committee on Environment

[2025HB-06276-R00-HB.DOCX](#) AN ACT CONCERNING THE DESIGNATION OF CORE FOREST BY THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION.

Information on Underlying Bill: [HB06276 \(Chrome users: right click open in new tab\)](#)

Last Action: 1/23/2025 Referred to Joint Committee on ENV

Sponsors: Rep. Vail, K. 052

Committees: Environment Committee

Statement of Purpose: To prevent privately held forestland from being designated as core forest without the owner's consent

1/23/2025

Referred to Joint Committee on Environment

2/10/2025 (ENV)

Vote to Draft

[2025HB-06282-R00-HB.DOCX](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROHIBITION ON SELLING OR USING CERTAIN INVASIVE PLANTS.

Information on Underlying Bill: [HB06282 \(Chrome users: right click open in new tab\)](#)

Last Action: 1/23/2025 Referred to Joint Committee on ENV
Sponsors: Rep. Bumgardner, A. 041
Committees: Environment Committee

Statement of Purpose: To prohibit the sale and use of certain invasive plant species

1/23/2025 Referred to Joint Committee on Environment

[2025HB-06830-R00-HB.DOCX](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING TRAINING FOR MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF INLAND WETLANDS AGENCIES.

Information on Underlying Bill: [HB06830 \(Chrome users: right click open in new tab\)](#)

Last Action: 1/29/2025 Referred to Joint Committee on PD

Sponsors: Planning and Development Committee

Committees: Planning and Development Committee

Statement of Purpose: To require the completion of an online training program by members and staff of inland wetlands agencies.

2/27/2025	(LCO)	Referred to Office of Legislative Research and Office of Fiscal Analysis 03/04/25 5:00 PM
2/18/2025	(LCO)	Filed with Legislative Commissioners' Office
2/14/2025	(PD)	Joint Favorable
1/30/2025		Public Hearing 02/03

DEEP Supports with one concern. See Public Testimony

[2025SB-00074-R00-SB.DOCX](#)

AN ACT REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION TO SUBMIT PLANS FOR ANY SIGNIFICANT TREE CUTTING UNDERTAKEN BY SAID AGENCY.

Information on Underlying Bill: [SB00074 \(Chrome users: right click open in new tab\)](#)

Last Action: 1/8/2025 Referred to Joint Committee on ENV

Sponsors: Sen. Harding, S. S30

Committees: Environment Committee

Statement of Purpose: To require the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to submit plans, in advance, for any significant tree removal projects to the General Assembly.

[2025SB-00231-R00-SB.DOCX](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING THE CALCULATION OF STATE FOREST LAND IN CERTAIN MUNICIPALITIES FOR PURPOSES OF GRANTS IN LIEU OF TAXES PAYMENTS.

Information on Underlying Bill: [SB00231 \(Chrome users: right click open in new tab\)](#)

Last Action: 1/8/2025 Referred to Joint Committee on PD

Sponsors: Sen. Somers, H. S18

Committees: *Planning and Development Committee*

Statement of Purpose: To calculate the value of state forest land, for purposes of grants in lieu of taxes payments by the state to municipalities, as real property for any municipality in which over fifty per cent of the land within such municipality's boundaries is state forest

2/10/2025

Change of Reference, House to Committee on Finance, Revenue and Bonding

1/8/2025

Referred to Joint Committee on Environment

[2025SB-00611-R00-SB.DOCX](#)

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MAXIMUM CHARGE FOR CERTAIN OCCUPATIONAL LICENSES, CERTIFICATIONS, PERMITS AND REGISTRATIONS.

Information on Underlying Bill: [SB00611 \(Chrome users: right click open in new tab\)](#)

Last Action: 1/15/2025 Referred to Joint Committee on GL

Sponsors: Sen. Fazio, R. S36 ; Sen. Gordon, J. S35 ; Sen. Maroney, J. S14

Committees: *General Law Committee*

Statement of Purpose: To eliminate application review fees charged by state licensing boards and limit the amount the state may charge for an occupational license to not more than one hundred dollars

To provide that neither the Commissioner of Consumer Protection nor the Department of Consumer Protection may charge certain individuals a license, permit, certification or registration fee in an amount that is greater than one hundred dollars per license, certification, permit or registration year.

2/6/2025

Public Hearing 02/10

Does not pertain to Sec 23 – Forest Practices Act

[2025SB-01378-R00-SB.DOCX](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING WILDFIRE RESPONSE AND MANAGEMENT.

Information on Underlying Bill: [SB01378 \(Chrome users: right click open in new tab\)](#)

Last Action: *2/24/2025 Referred to Joint Committee on ENV*

Sponsors: *Environment Committee*

Committees: *Environment Committee*

Statement of Purpose: To provide authority for the enhanced ability of the state to prepare for and respond to the threat that wildfires present to the state and its residents.

Public Hearing 03/03

Sec. 23-65h-1. Certification of forest practitioners

GENERAL DEFINITIONS

(a) The following terms shall have the meaning ascribed to them by section 23-65f of the general statutes: “commercial forest practices”; “commercial forest products”; “commercial forest practitioner”; “commissioner”; “department”; “forest land”; “forest practice”; “forest practitioner”; “person”; “tree.”

(b) As used in this section:

(1) “Applicant” means any person applying for certification or renewal of certification in accordance with this section;

(2) “Harvesting” means performing an activity related to the cutting or removal of forest tree species;

(3) “Passing grade” (on an examination for certification administered under this section): means a score of at least 75 out of a possible 100 point and;

(4) “State”: means the State of Connecticut.

CERTIFICATION OF FOREST PRACTITIONERS:

General Requirements

Applications

(c) Applications for forest practitioner certification and recertification shall be made on forms prescribed and furnished by the commissioner and shall require information as to the applicant’s name, mailing address, telephone number, business address, business telephone number, residence, educational background, a detailed summary of technical experience, a record of any continuing education courses or workshops successfully completed within the previous five years, and information concerning whether the applicant has engaged in any of the activities set forth in subdivisions (1) to (3), inclusive, of subsection (a) of section 23-65o of the general statutes, or has been convicted of a felony associated with the conduct of a regulated forest practice.

(d) Applications for forest practitioner certification shall be filed with the State Forester’s Office and shall be accompanied by the appropriate fee as specified in subsections (r) and (s) of this section.

(e) Applications shall not be deemed to be complete unless all information required by this subsection has been submitted and all fees required by this section have been paid. Incomplete applications shall be returned to the applicant.

(f) Applications for certification shall be signed by the applicant and shall contain the following statement, “I have personally examined and am familiar with the information submitted in this document and all attachments and certify that, based on reasonable investigation, the submitted information is true, accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand that any false statement made in this document or its attachments may be grounds for denial, suspension, or revocation of certification.”

Examinations for Initial Certification

(g) Except as provided in subdivisions (3) and (6) of subsection (c) of section 23-65h of the general statutes and in subsection (i) of this section, all applicants for initial forest practitioner certification shall achieve a passing grade on a written examination in order to

be granted certification.

(h) Any applicant whose application is complete, shall be permitted to take an examination for the requested certification, provided, however, that no applicant may take the examination unless he has paid the application and examination fees as in subsections (r) and (s) of this section. Applicants shall be notified, no less than 20 business days in advance, of the time and place of written and oral examinations. Such examinations shall assess the technical knowledge required for the requested certification set forth in section 23-65h of the general statutes as well as knowledge of statutes and regulations pertaining to forestry, forest practices, and the protection of wetlands and watercourses. An applicant who is denied certification due to failure to achieve a passing grade on such an examination may apply for reexamination without prejudice. Re-examinations shall be granted upon payment of an examination fee as specified in subsections (r) and (s) of this section.

(i) Any applicant for certification or renewal of certification who is illiterate may specifically request and will be granted an oral examination.

Denial of Certification

(j) The commissioner shall refuse to grant certification or recertification to any applicant who fails to achieve a passing grade on the examination or provides false or misleading information on the application for certification. A person who has been denied certification shall be notified of the commissioner's decision by certified mail, return receipt requested, of the fact and of the basis for denial.

Issuance of Certificate

(k) The commissioner shall issue a certificate to any applicant who has satisfied all of the requirements for certification set forth in this section or otherwise has met the requisite experience requirements of subdivision (3) of subsection (c) of section 23-65h of the general statutes. Certificates shall be valid for four years from the date of issuance and shall show the full name of the certificate holder, the type of certification granted, the certificate number, the date of expiration of the certification, and shall be signed by the commissioner. The commissioner shall also issue wallet cards containing the same information as the full size certificate.

Certificate Renewal

(l) (1) An application for renewal of a certificate shall be submitted to the commissioner no less than 60 calendar days prior to the expiration date of the certificate. The application for renewal of certification shall be on a form provided by the commissioner, shall be accompanied by payment of the application fee in accordance with subsections (r) and (s) of this section, shall include evidence of satisfaction of all continuing education requirements of this section, and shall include information concerning whether the applicant has engaged in any of the activities set forth in subdivisions (1) to (3), inclusive, of subsection (a) of section 23-65o of the general statutes, or has been convicted of a felony associated with the conduct of a regulated forest practice.

(2) The commissioner may grant a sixty-day extension for any forest practitioner who failed to submit a complete application for renewal prior to the expiration date of such forest practitioner's certification. Any forest practitioner granted such an extension shall submit a complete application for renewal not later than the end date of such sixty-day extension

period. Any such renewed certification issued by the commissioner following such a sixty-day extension period shall not require reexamination by such forest practitioner prior to such issuance but shall require the submission of an additional fee of \$100.00.

(m) No certificate shall be renewed unless the applicant has submitted all reports required pursuant to section 23-65i of the general statutes.

(n) The commissioner shall require an applicant for renewal of certification to take an examination for recertification if the statutes or regulations concerning forestry, forest practices, or wetlands and watercourses have been revised or adopted since the date of issuance of such applicant's current certification and such revised or adopted statutes or regulations will result in a change in the conduct of forest practices. If an examination for recertification will be required, the commissioner shall notify the applicant in writing no later than 30 days after the date the renewal application is received by the commissioner. An examination for renewal of certification shall be granted upon payment of the examination fee as specified in subsections (r) and (s) of this section.

Continuing Education Standards for Renewal of Certification

(o) In accordance with section 23-65i of the general statutes, all certified forest practitioners shall ~~participate~~ obtain, during the period of such certification, ~~in a relevant program of professional education to improve or maintain professional forestry skills that is sponsored by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the New England Society of American Foresters, The University of Connecticut, Yale University or the Connecticut Cooperative Extension System, or in another program approved by the department,~~ continuing education units (CEU's) from the following two categories:

(1) Category 1. CEU's shall be issued for participation in a relevant program of professional education to improve or maintain professional forestry skills that is sponsored by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the New England Society of American Foresters, The University of Connecticut, Yale University or the Connecticut Cooperative Extension System, or in another program approved by the department.

(2) Category 2. CEU's shall be issued for participation in professional development activities undertaken outside of normal job responsibilities and which involve active participation and significant contribution to the profession, including but not limited to:

(i) Conducting presentations, teaching, and composing publications on subject matter which qualifies under Category 1

(ii) Service on state or local boards of equivalent forestry related service organizations

(iii) Service on local municipal boards affecting land use

(iv) Service on national or state board of directors or equivalent of a profession representing forestry or allied natural resource professions

(v) active participation as a member of a committee which supports subsections (ii) through (iv) above.

(p) Assigning continuing education units (CEU's). Any person may request that the commissioner approve any workshops, meetings, college level credit courses, courses, seminars, ~~or~~ field sessions, presentations, lessons, publications, or service as having substantial educational value for certified forest practitioners and assign an appropriate number of CEU's in accordance with subsection (q) of this section, below. Any person requesting such approval and assignment of CEU's shall provide to the commissioner the

following relevant information:

- a. Date of event
- b. Title
- c. Agenda
- d. Name and Title of Instructors
- e. Sponsoring Organization
- f. Hours of Duration and/or credits assigned
- g. Classroom and Field Hours
- h. Contact Person

(9) Name of Board or Committee and Title of Participant

Assignment of CEU Credits

(q) The commissioner shall review all information provided in accordance with subsection (p) of this section, above and, if the commissioner finds that the workshop, meeting, course, seminar, tour, field session, ~~or~~ college level credit course, presentation, lesson, publication, or service proposed for CEU credit provides substantial education in the professional forestry skills and professional functions, or involves active participation and significant contribution to the profession, encompassed by one or more of the forest practitioner certifications, CEU's shall be assigned as follows:

a. one (1) CEU shall be assigned for each ~~full three (3) hours~~ hour of duration of qualifying workshops, meetings, courses, seminars, ~~or~~ field sessions, or non-professional or non-technical presentations and conducted workshops on other forest related activities.

b. ~~four (4)~~ Twelve (12) CEU's shall be assigned for each credit hour in a qualifying college level credit course.

(3) two (2) CEU's shall be assigned for each hour of duration conducting or leading professional or technical presentations or workshops.

(4) five (5) CEU's shall be assigned per calendar year for chairing a board or subcommittee of a board

(5) two (2) CEU's shall be signed per calendar year for active committee involvement

Renewal of Certification

c. Each applicant for renewal of Forester certification shall participate, during the period of such certification, ~~in a program of professional education equivalent to twelve (12) and obtain thirty-six (36) CEU's.~~ Category 2 CEU's shall not exceed twelve (12) CEU's during the period of such certification.

d. Each applicant for renewal of Supervising Forest Products Harvester certification shall participate, during the period of such certification, ~~in a program of professional education equivalent to twelve (12) and obtain twenty-four (24) CEU's.~~ Category 2 CEU's shall not exceed eight (8) CEU's during the period of such certification.

e. Each applicant for renewal of Forest Products Harvester certification shall participate, during the period of such certification, ~~in a program of professional education equivalent to twelve (12) and obtain eighteen (18) CEU's.~~ Category 2 CEU's shall not exceed six (6) CEU's during the period of such certification.

FEES

(r) The fee for applying for certification or renewal of certification shall be \$235.00. The fee shall be submitted simultaneously with the application for certification or renewal of

certification and certification shall not be granted or renewed prior to payment of the fee. The fee provided in this section shall be non-refundable.

(s) An applicant for forest practitioner certification or renewal of certification shall, if required by this section to take an examination, pay an examination fee of \$65.00 for each examination. The fee provided in this section shall be non-refundable.

(Effective December 27, 1994; Amended November 5, 2013; Amended January 18, 2024)