



County of Lassen  
Department of Planning and Building Services

• Planning • Building • Environmental Health • Code Enforcement • Surveyor • Surface Mining

March 18, 2025

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TO: Lassen County Board of Supervisors  
Agenda Date: March 25, 2025

Zoning and Building  
Inspection Requests  
Phone: 530 257-5263

FROM: Gaylon Norwood, Acting Director Planning and  
Building Services

*YFN*

SUBJECT: AB1288 Letter of Support

Action requested:

- 1) Receive report; and
- 2) Approve letter of support.

Summary:

The Lassen County Environmental Health Division (LCEHD) employs Registered Environmental Health Specialists (REHS) as required for their Environmental Health Specialist 1, 2, 3, and Director of Environmental Health positions. If LCEHD were fully staffed we would have three REHS inspectors (at the 1, 2, or 3 classification), and one REHS Director of Environmental Health. LCEHD has been experiencing staffing shortages since 2020, and we currently have one position that we have not been successful in filling for over a year. Difficulty in filling REHS positions has been a concern for all health jurisdictions within California.

The REHS program is mandated in the California Health & Safety Code sections 106600-106735, and is overseen by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). In order to be a REHS the applicant must meet education and experience requirements, and pass a State exam. Assembly Bill 1288 seeks to give REHS applicants more flexibility in scheduling their exam attempts to hopefully increase their chances of passing the registration exam and staying within the career. The numbers of new REHS applicants has been under decline, and therefore REHS staff statewide has been shrinking. This legislation is a step towards making the REHS profession more accessible, and therefore increasing the workforce statewide.

Financial impact:

None.

SC:sc

County of Lassen  
**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**



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County Administration Office  
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March 25, 2025

Assemblymember Heather Hadwick  
1021 O Street, Suite 5710  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 1288 (Addis and Valencia): Registered Environmental Health Specialists as Introduced February 21, 2025 – SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Hadwick:

The Lassen County Board of Supervisors would like to express our SUPPORT for Assembly Bill 1288, authored by Assembly Members Addis and Valencia, which, as introduced, would extend the time in which local public health/environmental health departments may train and employ a local Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) trainee from three years to five years.

Currently, certification for the REHS program is administered by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). The program ensures that certified REHS' have met adequate education, training, and experience requirements and have passed a comprehensive state examination. While working towards certification, individuals may be employed as a REHS trainee by local public health/environmental health departments for up to three years. However, limited examination offerings and strict time limitations governing how often a trainee may take the exam have resulted in trainees having to be reassigned or released – even if they wish to continue to pursue a career as a REHS within California. The current state exam passage rate averages around 60 percent.

REHS staff play a critical role in safeguarding our communities. In Lassen County, our Environmental Health Division employs REHS staff to inspect local facilities and work collaboratively with business owners to achieve compliance with Federal and State regulations that are in place to keep residents safe. Our REHS staff administer programs that protect the people of Lassen County such as food safety, drinking water safety, vector control, body art permits, onsite waste treatment system permits, pool safety, and hazardous and medical waste management. In recent years we have experienced difficulty in both recruiting and retaining REHS staff within our small community.

The goals of Assembly Bill 1288 will help address some of the recruitment and retention challenges we are currently experiencing. It aims to assist health departments statewide, and specifically here in Lassen County, to strengthen and sustain our REHS workforce pipeline with a simple extension of the time needed to pass the required REHS exam. While this provision will

Assemblymember Heather Hadwick

March 25, 2025

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not solve some of the larger issues all jurisdictions face, it will expand opportunities for entry-level employees to continue their careers with local health jurisdictions.

For these reasons, the County of Lassen Board of Supervisors respectfully asks for your vote of approval for Assembly Bill 1288.

Sincerely,

Tom Neely  
Chairman, Board of Supervisors  
Lassen County

BoS:sc



## AB-1288 Registered environmental health specialists. (2025-2026)

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CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2025–2026 REGULAR SESSION

### ASSEMBLY BILL

**NO. 1288**

Introduced by Assembly Members Addis and Valencia

February 21, 2025

An act to amend Sections 106615, 106625, 106665, and 106675 of the Health and Safety Code, relating to public health.

### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1288, as introduced, Addis. Registered environmental health specialists.

Existing law provides for the certification of registered environmental health specialists by the State Department of Public Health, and establishes application, examination, and renewal fees for this certification. Existing law defines the scope of practice for a registered environmental health professional to include, but not be limited to, the prevention of environmental health hazards and the promotion and protection of the public health and the environment in specified areas, including, among others, food protection, housing, and hazardous materials management. Existing law authorizes a local health department to employ a registered environmental health specialist to enforce public health laws, as specified. Existing law authorizes an environmental health specialist trainee to work under the supervision of a registered environmental health specialist for a period not to exceed 3 years.

This bill would extend that period of supervision to instead not exceed 5 years. The bill would include body art and medical waste in the scope of practice of registered environmental health specialists.

Existing law requires an Environmental Health Specialist Registration Committee to be appointed to advise and to make recommendations to the department. Existing law prescribes the membership of the committee, including members with experience as local directors of environmental health, as specified, and the Chief of the Environmental Planning and Local Health Services Branch, who serves as executive officer in a nonvoting role.

This bill would instead make the State Environmental Health Director serve as the executive officer of the committee. The bill would make clarifying technical changes to the terminology used in those and related provisions to distinguish local directors of environmental health from the State Environmental Health Director.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

**SECTION 1.** Section 106615 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:

~~106615. The words and phrases defined in this section shall have the following meaning, For purposes of this article, the following definitions apply, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:~~

(a) "Department" means the State Department of Public ~~Health Services~~. *Health*.

(b) "Committee" means the Environmental Health Specialist Registration Committee.

(c) "Registered environmental health specialist" means an environmental health professional educated and trained within the field of environmental health who is registered in accordance with the provisions of this article.

(d) "Environmental health specialist trainee" means a person ~~who possesses (1) a~~ *who meets both of the following requirements:*

(1) *Possesses a minimum of a bachelor's degree, including 30 semester units of basic sciences, from a department approved educational institution or an educational institution of collegiate grade listed in the directory of accredited institutions of postsecondary education compiled by the American Council on Education, but who has not completed the specific coursework and experience requirements in the field of environmental health as required by Section 106660 for registration, and (2) who is registration.*

(2) *Is engaged in an approved environmental health training plan.*

(e) "Scope of practice in environmental health" means the practice of environmental health by registered environmental health specialists in the public and private sector within the meaning of this article and includes, but is not limited to, organization, management, education, enforcement, consultation, and emergency response for the purpose of prevention of environmental health hazards and the promotion and protection of the public health and the environment in the following areas: food protection; housing; institutional environmental health; land use; community noise control; recreational swimming areas and waters; electromagnetic radiation control; ~~solid, liquid, solid and liquid waste~~ and hazardous materials management; underground storage tank control; onsite septic systems; vector control; drinking water quality; water sanitation; emergency preparedness; *body art; medical waste;* and milk and dairy sanitation pursuant to Section 33113 of the Food and Agricultural Code. Activities of registered environmental health specialists shall be regulated by the department upon the recommendation of the committee.

(f) "Certificate of registration" means a signed document issued by the department as evidence of registration and qualification to practice as a registered environmental health specialist under this article. The certificate shall bear the designation "registered environmental health specialist" and shall show the name of the person, date of issue, registration number, and seal.

(g) "Experience requirement" means on-the-job training and experience, as stated in this article, that all environmental health specialist trainees shall complete prior to obtaining eligibility for the environmental health specialist examination.

(h) "Approved environmental health training plan" means a training program in an organization that plans to utilize environmental health specialist trainees and has on file with the department a copy of its training plan that conforms with the requirements of Section 106665, and that has been approved by the committee.

~~(i) "Director" means the director:~~

*(i) "Examination" means a written professional examination prescribed by the department, administered in person or online, for registration in accordance with this article.*

**SEC. 2.** Section 106625 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:

**106625.** The governing body of a local health department may employ on a full-time basis one or more registered environmental health specialists, each of whom shall be a registered environmental health specialist as provided for in this ~~article~~ *article*, for the purpose of the enforcement of statutes related to public health, ~~and the regulations of the department, and any local ordinances of a local health department that relate to activities under pursuant to~~ subdivision (e) of Section 106615. However, any person who is known as an environmental

health specialist trainee may be employed to work under the supervision of a registered environmental health specialist, until ~~he or she~~ *the trainee* is qualified by examination ~~as provided under~~ *pursuant to* Section 106670, for a period ~~which that~~ shall not exceed ~~three~~ *five* years. Prior to employment, the trainee shall have a current evaluation letter from the department stating that the education qualifications specified in Section 106660 have been met.

**SEC. 3.** Section 106665 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:

**106665.** An approved environmental health training plan shall include program elements in the training, duration of training, and types of training.

(a) Program elements, duration of training, and experience are as follows:

(1) All environmental health specialist trainees, shall complete a basic training period in an approved program. The training period shall include training in at least six elements, with three of the elements selected from the following basic elements:

(A) Food protection.

(B) Solid or liquid waste management, or both.

(C) Water supply.

(D) Housing and institutions.

(E) Bathing places.

(F) Vector control.

(G) Hazardous materials management or underground tank program, or both.

The remaining three elements may include any other basic element or any of the following elements: air sanitation, safety and accident prevention, land development and use, disaster sanitation, electromagnetic radiation, milk and dairy products, noise control, occupational health, and rabies and animal disease control.

(2) Training in each of three basic elements shall ~~be not~~ *not be* less than 20 percent of the total required training hours. Time spent in the remaining three elements shall be not less than 40 percent of the total required training hours. The employer shall designate the methods, elements, and types of training or experience for the remaining part of the time required for entrance to the registered environmental health specialist examination as specified in Section 106670. The specified training may be cumulative and scheduled at the discretion of the employing agency over this period.

(3) The training may be accomplished by assignments chosen by the employing agency and under the supervision of a registered environmental health specialist.

(4) For those environmental health specialist trainees requiring more than one year of experience, the additional experience will be in one or more elements of environmental health listed in this section and may be outside of a local environmental health program.

(5) Training and experience gained working for a governmental or a nonprofit entity, or both, may be counted toward the first-year training experience requirement if the training and experience is determined by the department to be equivalent to what would be gained in a local environmental health jurisdiction.

(b) Types of training:

The training program shall be integrated into the environmental health specialist trainee's job assignment and shall include ~~items the items described in paragraphs (1) and (2) and may include items the items described in paragraphs (3), (4), and (5):~~

(1) A minimum of 20 hours per month of field instruction with direct supervision by a registered environmental health specialist for the first six months of employment. ~~(The The total minimum requirement in this area shall be 150-hours-) hours.~~

(2) Independent time with adequate supervision and guidance.

(3) Office training with pretesting and posttesting.



(4) Lectures.

(5) Adequate office time to review and study.

(c) Requirements for certification of training:

(1) Environmental health specialist trainees shall receive their training from the department or agency that has a training plan approved by the committee.

(2) A daily log for the certification of the environmental health specialist trainee shall be maintained by the ~~Director of Environmental Health~~ local director.

(A) A daily log covering elements and hours spent of all training shall be kept by the environmental health specialist trainees, and verified by the trainer or supervisor on a weekly basis.

(B) Short narrative reports or copies of the monthly schedule of the environmental health specialist trainee's training and progress shall be submitted by the training coordinator to the ~~director~~ local director every month throughout the traineeship.

(C) The ~~Director of Environmental Health~~ local director shall review the trainee's records on a monthly basis and shall certify on a quarterly basis that the records of training are accurate.

(D) The ~~Director of Environmental Health~~ local director shall notify the department within 30 days of the date an environmental health specialist trainee is hired or terminated.

(E) Copies of the environmental health specialist trainee's log, as well as the narrative reports or copies of monthly schedules shall be retained in the personnel file of the environmental health specialist trainee for at least one year after the environmental health specialist trainee successfully completes the registered environmental health specialist examination.

(3) When an environmental health specialist trainee completes the training program, the ~~Director of Environmental Health~~ local director shall forward certification to the department. This certification shall include the program areas, length of time, dates for the areas of ~~training~~ training, and a statement that the environmental health specialist trainee followed the approved training plan.

(d) Those jurisdictions that cannot provide the required training elements within their jurisdictions shall initiate a program of training exchange with another jurisdiction having an approved training program.

(e) For purposes of this section, "local director" means a local director of environmental health or the director's designee.

**SEC. 4.** Section 106675 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:

**106675.** (a) (1) An Environmental Health Specialist Registration Committee shall be appointed to advise and to make recommendations to the department with respect to, and to take other actions as described in this article for the establishment of rules and regulations necessary to ensure, the proper administration and enforcement of the registration of environmental health specialists whose duties in public health and environmental health require knowledge and skills in the physical, biological, and environmental health sciences and whose performance of professional duties is necessary for the promotion of life, health, and ~~well-being~~ the well-being of the public.

The

(2) The members of the former Sanitarian Registration Certification Committee shall serve as members of the new committee until the expiration of their terms.

(b) The committee shall consist of the ~~Chief of the Environmental Planning and Local Health Services Branch, department, or the designee of the chief~~, State Environmental Health Director or the director's designee who shall serve as executive officer but who shall not vote, and the following 10 members who are residents of the state:

(1) Two members appointed by the ~~director~~ State Environmental Health Director from the California Conference of Directors of Environmental Health who shall be environmental health specialists with at least two ~~years~~ years of experience as local directors of environmental health in this state.

(2) Three members appointed by the ~~director~~ *State Environmental Health Director*, each of whom shall be a qualified, practicing environmental health specialist registered in California for a period of five or more years. For purposes of this subdivision:

(A) One member shall be employed in the public sector at the time of appointment.

(B) One member shall be employed in the private sector at the time of appointment.

(C) One member shall be from the California Environmental Health Association.

(3) One member appointed by the ~~director~~ *State Environmental Health Director* from the California Conference of Local Health Officers.

(4) Two members appointed by the ~~director~~ *State Environmental Health Director* from the environmental health faculty of those California universities and colleges with approved curricula leading to a degree in environmental health.

(5) Two public members who have not been engaged at any time within five years immediately preceding their appointment in pursuits that lie within the field of environmental health or the profession regulated by the committee of which they are members. The Senate Rules Committee shall appoint one public member and the Speaker of the Assembly shall appoint one public member.