

Act No. 227
Public Acts of 2010
Approved by the Governor
December 14, 2010
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**STATE OF MICHIGAN
95TH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2010**

Introduced by Rep. Clemente

ENROLLED HOUSE BILL No. 6359

AN ACT to amend 1994 PA 451, entitled "An act to protect the environment and natural resources of the state; to codify, revise, consolidate, and classify laws relating to the environment and natural resources of the state; to regulate the discharge of certain substances into the environment; to regulate the use of certain lands, waters, and other natural resources of the state; to prescribe the powers and duties of certain state and local agencies and officials; to provide for certain charges, fees, assessments, and donations; to provide certain appropriations; to prescribe penalties and provide remedies; and to repeal acts and parts of acts," by amending sections 20126 and 20126a (MCL 324.20126 and 324.20126a), section 20126 as amended by 1999 PA 196 and section 20126a as added by 1995 PA 71, and by adding section 20114e.

The People of the State of Michigan enact:

Sec. 20114e. (1) The director shall establish a response activity review panel to advise him or her on technical or scientific disputes, including disputes regarding assessment of risk, concerning response activity plans and no further action reports.

(2) The panel shall consist of 15 individuals, appointed by the director. Each member of the panel shall meet all of the following minimum requirements:

(a) Meet 1 or more of the following:

(i) Hold a current professional engineer's or professional geologist's license or registration from a state, tribe, or United States territory, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and have the equivalent of 6 years of full-time relevant experience.

(ii) Have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution of higher education in a discipline of engineering or science and the equivalent of 10 years of full-time relevant experience.

(iii) Have a master's degree from an accredited institution of higher education in a discipline of engineering or science and the equivalent of 8 years of full-time relevant experience.

(b) Remain current in his or her field through participation in continuing education or other activities.

(3) An individual is not eligible to be a member of the panel if any 1 of the following is true:

(a) The individual is a current employee of any office, department, or agency of the state.

(b) The individual is a party to 1 or more contracts with the department and the compensation paid under those contracts represented more than 5% of the individual's annual gross revenue in any of the preceding 3 years.

(c) The individual is employed by an entity that is a party to 1 or more contracts with the department and the compensation paid to the individual's employer under these contracts represented more than 5% of the employer's annual gross revenue in any of the preceding 3 years.

(d) The individual was employed by the department within the preceding 3 years.

(4) An individual appointed to the panel shall serve for a term of 3 years and may be reappointed for 1 additional 3-year term. After serving 2 consecutive terms, the individual may not be a member of the panel for a period of at least 2 years before being eligible to be appointed to the panel again. The terms for members first appointed shall be staggered so that not more than 5 vacancies are scheduled to occur in a single year. Individuals appointed to the panel shall serve without compensation. However, members of the panel may be reimbursed for their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties as members of the panel.

(5) A vacancy on the panel shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

(6) The business that the panel may perform shall be conducted at a public meeting of the panel held in compliance with the open meetings act, 1976 PA 267, MCL 15.261 to 15.275.

(7) A person who submitted a response activity plan or a no further action report may appeal a decision made by the department regarding a technical or scientific dispute, including a dispute regarding assessment of risk, concerning the response activity plan or no further action report by submitting a petition to the director. The petition shall include the issues in dispute, the relevant facts upon which the dispute is based, factual data, analysis, opinion, and supporting documentation for the petitioner's position. The petitioner shall also submit a fee of \$3,500.00. If the director believes that the dispute may be able to be resolved without convening the panel, the director may contact the petitioner regarding the issues in dispute and may negotiate a resolution of the dispute. This negotiation period shall not exceed 45 days. If the dispute is resolved without convening the panel, any fee that is submitted with the petition shall be returned.

(8) If a dispute is not resolved pursuant to subsection (7), the director shall schedule a meeting of 5 members of the panel, selected on the basis of their relevant expertise, within 45 days after receiving the original petition. A member selected for the dispute resolution process shall agree not to accept employment by the person bringing the dispute before the panel, or to undertake any employment concerning the facility in question for a period of 1 year after the decision has been rendered on the matter if that employment would represent more than 5% of the member's gross revenue in any of the preceding 3 years. The director shall provide a copy of all supporting documentation to members of the panel who will hear the dispute. An alternative member may be selected by the director to replace a member who is unable to participate in the dispute resolution process. Any action by the members selected to hear the dispute shall require a majority of the votes cast. The members selected for the dispute resolution process shall elect a chairperson of the dispute resolution process. At a meeting scheduled to hear the dispute, representatives of the petitioner and the department shall each be afforded an opportunity to present their positions to the panel. The fee that is received by the director along with the petition shall be forwarded to the state treasurer for deposit into the fund.

(9) Within 45 days after hearing the dispute, the members of the panel who were selected for and participated in the dispute resolution process shall make a recommendation regarding the petition and provide written notice of the recommendation to the director of the department and the petitioner. The written recommendation shall include the specific scientific or technical rationale for the recommendation. The panel's recommendation regarding the petition may be to adopt, modify, or reverse, in whole or in part, the department's decision that is the subject of the petition. If the panel does not make its recommendation within this 45-day time period, the decision of the department is the final decision of the director.

(10) Within 60 days after receiving written notice of the panel's recommendation, the director shall issue a final decision, in writing, regarding the petition. However, this time period may be extended by written agreement between the director and the petitioner. If the director agrees with the recommendation of the panel, the department shall incorporate the recommendation into its response to the response activity plan or the no further action report. If the director rejects the recommendation of the panel, the director shall issue a written decision to the petitioner with a specific rationale for rejecting the recommendation of the panel. If the director fails to issue a final decision within the time period provided for in this subsection, the recommendation of the panel shall be considered the final decision of the director. The final decision of the director under this subsection is subject to review pursuant to section 631 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.631.

(11) Upon request of the director, the panel shall make a recommendation to the department on whether a member should be removed from the panel. Prior to making this recommendation, the panel may convene a peer review panel to evaluate the conduct of the member with regard to compliance with this part.

(12) A member of the panel shall not participate in the dispute resolution process for any appeal in which that member has a conflict of interest. The director shall select a member of the panel to replace a member who has a conflict of interest under this subsection. For purposes of this subsection, a member has a conflict of interest if a petitioner has hired that member or the member's employer on any environmental matter within the preceding 3 years.

(13) As used in this section, “relevant experience” means active participation in the preparation, design, implementation, and assessment of remedial investigations, feasibility studies, interim response activities, and remedial actions under this part. This experience must demonstrate the exercise of sound professional judgment and knowledge of the requirements of this part.

Sec. 20126. (1) Notwithstanding any other provision or rule of law and except as provided in subsections (2), (3), (4), and (5) and section 20128, the following persons are liable under this part:

(a) The owner or operator of a facility if the owner or operator is responsible for an activity causing a release or threat of release.

(b) The owner or operator of a facility at the time of disposal of a hazardous substance if the owner or operator is responsible for an activity causing a release or threat of release.

(c) An owner or operator of a facility who becomes an owner or operator on or after June 5, 1995, unless the owner or operator complies with both of the following:

(i) A baseline environmental assessment is conducted prior to or within 45 days after the earlier of the date of purchase, occupancy, or foreclosure. For purposes of this section, assessing property to conduct a baseline environmental assessment does not constitute occupancy.

(ii) The owner or operator provides a baseline environmental assessment to the department and subsequent purchaser or transferee within 6 months after the earlier of the date of purchase, occupancy, or foreclosure.

(d) A person who by contract, agreement, or otherwise arranged for disposal or treatment, or arranged with a transporter for transport for disposal or treatment, of a hazardous substance owned or possessed by the person, by any other person, at a facility owned or operated by another person and containing the hazardous substance. This subdivision does not include any of the following:

(i) A person who, on or after June 5, 1995, arranges for the sale or transport of a secondary material for use in producing a new product. As used in this subparagraph, secondary material means scrap metal, paper, plastic, glass, textiles, or rubber, which has demonstrated reuse or recycling potential and has been separated or removed from the solid waste stream for reuse or recycling, whether or not subsequent separation and processing is required, if substantial amounts of the material are consistently used in the manufacture of products which may otherwise be produced from a raw or virgin material.

(ii) A person who, prior to June 5, 1995, arranges for the sale or transport of a secondary material for use in producing a new product unless the state has incurred response activity costs associated with these secondary materials prior to December 17, 1999. As used in this subparagraph, secondary material means scrap metal, paper, plastic, glass, textiles, or rubber, which has demonstrated reuse or recycling potential and has been separated or removed from the solid waste stream for reuse or recycling, whether or not subsequent separation and processing is required, if substantial amounts of the material are consistently used in the manufacture of products which may otherwise be produced from a raw or virgin material.

(iii) A person who arranges the lawful transport or disposal of any product or container commonly used in a residential household, which is in a quantity commonly used in a residential household, and which was used in the person's residential household.

(e) A person who accepts or accepted any hazardous substance for transport to a facility selected by that person.

(f) The estate or trust of a person described in subdivisions (a) to (e).

(2) Subject to section 20107a, an owner or operator who complies with subsection (1)(c) is not liable for contamination existing at the facility at the earlier of the date of purchase, occupancy, or foreclosure, unless the person is responsible for an activity causing the contamination existing at the facility. Subsection (1)(c) does not alter a person's liability with regard to a subsequent release or threat of release at a facility if the person is responsible for an activity causing the subsequent release or threat of release.

(3) Notwithstanding subsection (1), the following persons are not liable under this part with respect to contamination at a facility resulting from a release or threat of release unless the person is responsible for an activity causing that release or threat of release:

(a) The state or a local unit of government that acquired ownership or control of a facility involuntarily through bankruptcy, tax delinquency, abandonment, a transfer from a lender pursuant to subsection (7), or other circumstances in which the government involuntarily acquires title or control by virtue of its governmental function or as provided in this part, a local unit of government to which ownership or control of a facility is transferred by the state or by another local unit of government that is not liable under subsection (1), or the state or a local unit of government that acquired ownership or control of a facility by seizure, receivership, or forfeiture pursuant to the operation of law or by court order.

(b) A state or local unit of government that holds or acquires an easement interest in a facility, holds or acquires an interest in a facility by dedication in a plat, or by dedication pursuant to 1909 PA 283, MCL 220.1 to 239.6, or otherwise

holds or acquires an interest in a facility for a transportation or utility corridor, including sewers, pipes, and pipelines, or public right of way.

(c) A person who holds an easement interest in a facility or holds a utility franchise to provide service, for the purpose of conveying or providing goods or services, including, but not limited to, utilities, sewers, roads, railways, and pipelines; or a person that acquires access through an easement.

(d) A person who owns severed subsurface mineral rights or severed subsurface formations or who leases subsurface mineral rights or formations.

(e) The state or a local unit of government that leases property to a person if the state or the local unit of government is not liable under this part for environmental contamination at the property.

(f) A person who owns or occupies residential real property if hazardous substance use at the property is consistent with residential use.

(g) A person who acquires a facility as a result of the death of the prior owner or operator of the facility, whether by inheritance, devise, or transfer from an inter vivos or testamentary trust.

(h) A person who did not know and had no reason to know that the property was a facility. To establish that the person did not know and did not have a reason to know that the property was a facility, the person shall have undertaken at the time of acquisition all appropriate inquiry into the previous ownership and uses of the property consistent with good commercial or customary practice. A determination of liability under this section shall take into account any specialized knowledge or experience on the part of the person, the relationship of the purchase price to the value of the property if uncontaminated by a hazardous substance, commonly known or reasonable ascertainable information about the property, the obviousness of the presence or likely presence of a release or threat of release at the property, and the ability to detect a release or threat of release by appropriate inspection.

(i) A utility performing normal construction, maintenance, and repair activities in the normal course of its utility service business. This subsection does not apply to property owned by the utility.

(j) A lessee who uses the leased property for a retail, office, or commercial purpose regardless of the level of the lessee's hazardous substance use.

(k) A person who holds a license, easement, or lease, or who otherwise occupies or operates property, for the purpose of siting, constructing, operating, or removing a wind energy conversion system or any component of a wind energy conversion system. As used in this subdivision, "wind energy conversion system" means that term as defined in section 13 of the clean, renewable, and efficient energy act, 2008 PA 295, MCL 460.1013.

(4) Notwithstanding subsection (1), the following persons are not liable under this part:

(a) The owner or operator of a hazardous waste treatment, storage, or disposal facility regulated pursuant to part 111 from which there is a release or threat of release solely from the treatment, storage, or disposal facility, or a waste management unit at the facility and the release or threat of release is subject to corrective action under part 111.

(b) A lender that engages in or conducts a lawful marshalling or liquidation of personal property if the lender does not cause or contribute to the environmental contamination. This includes holding a sale of personal property on a portion of the facility.

(c) The owner or operator of property onto which contamination has migrated unless that person is responsible for an activity causing the release that is the source of the contamination.

(d) A person who owns or operates a facility in which the release or threat of release was caused solely by 1 or more of the following:

(i) An act of God.

(ii) An act of war.

(iii) An act or omission of a third party other than an employee or agent of the person or a person in a contractual relationship existing either directly or indirectly with a person who is liable under this section.

(e) Any person for environmental contamination addressed in a no further action report that is approved by the department or is considered approved under section 20114d. Notwithstanding this subdivision, a person may be liable under this part for the following:

(i) A subsequent release not addressed in the no further action report if the person is otherwise liable under this part for that release.

(ii) Environmental contamination that is not addressed in the no further action report and for which the person is otherwise liable under this part.

(iii) If the no further action report relies on land use or resource use restrictions, an owner or operator who desires to change those restrictions is responsible for any response activities necessary to comply with this part for any land use or resource use other than the land use or resource use that was the basis for the no further action report.

(iv) If the no further action report relies on monitoring necessary to assure the effectiveness and integrity of the remedial action, an owner or operator who is otherwise liable for environmental contamination addressed in a no further action report is liable under this part for additional response activities necessary to address any potential exposure to the environmental contamination demonstrated by the monitoring in excess of the levels relied on in the no further action report.

(v) If the remedial actions that were the basis for the no further action report fail to meet performance objectives that are identified in the no further action report, an owner or operator who is otherwise liable for environmental contamination addressed in the no further action report is liable under this part for response activities necessary to satisfy the performance objectives or otherwise comply with this part.

(5) Notwithstanding any other provision of this part, the state or a local unit of government or a lender who has not participated in the management of the facility is not liable under this part for costs or damages as a result of response activity taken in response to a release or threat of release. For a lender, this subsection applies only to response activity undertaken prior to foreclosure. This subsection does not preclude liability for costs or damages as a result of gross negligence, including reckless, willful, or wanton misconduct, or intentional misconduct by the state or local unit of government.

(6) In establishing liability under this section, the department bears the burden of proof.

(7) Beginning on the effective date of the 2010 amendatory act that amended this section, the department shall not implement or enforce R 299.5901 to R 299.5919 of the Michigan administrative code, except the department may implement and enforce the following rules:

(a) Subrules (2), (6), (8), and (9) of rule 903, R 299.5903 of the Michigan administrative code.

(b) Subrules (2) through (6) of rule 905, R 299.5905 of the Michigan administrative code.

(c) Rule 919, R 299.5919 of the Michigan administrative code.

(8) Notwithstanding subsection (1)(c), if the owner or operator of the facility became the owner or operator of the facility on or after June 5, 1995 and prior to March 6, 1996, and the facility contains an underground storage tank system as defined in part 213, that owner or operator is liable under this part only if the owner or operator is responsible for an activity causing a release or threat of release.

(9) An owner or operator who was in compliance with subsection (1)(c) prior to the effective date of the amendatory act that added this subsection, is considered to be in compliance with subsection (1)(c).

Sec. 20126a. (1) Except as provided in section 20126(2), a person who is liable under section 20126 is jointly and severally liable for all of the following:

(a) All costs of response activity lawfully incurred by the state relating to the selection and implementation of response activity under this part.

(b) Any other costs of response activity reasonably incurred under the circumstances by any other person.

(c) Damages for the full value of injury to, destruction of, or loss of natural resources, including the reasonable costs of assessing the injury, destruction, or loss resulting from the release.

(2) The costs of response activity recoverable under subsection (1) shall also include all costs of response activity reasonably incurred by the state prior to the promulgation of rules relating to the selection and implementation of response activity under this part, excepting those cases where cost recovery actions have been filed before July 12, 1990. A person challenging the recovery of costs under this subdivision has the burden of establishing that the costs were not reasonably incurred under the circumstances that existed at the time the costs were incurred.

(3) The amounts recoverable in an action under this section shall include interest. This interest shall accrue from the date payment is demanded in writing, or the date of the expenditure or damage, whichever is later. The rate of interest on the outstanding unpaid balance of the amounts recoverable under this section shall be the same rate as is specified in section 6013(8) of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.6013.

(4) In the case of injury to, destruction of, or loss of natural resources under subsection (1)(c), liability shall be to the state for natural resources belonging to, managed by, controlled by, appertaining to, or held in trust by the state or a local unit of government. Sums recovered by the state under this part for natural resource damages shall be retained by the department, for use only to restore, repair, replace, or acquire the equivalent of the natural resources injured or acquire substitute or alternative resources. There shall be no double recovery under this part for natural resource damages, including the costs of damage assessment or restoration, rehabilitation, replacement, or acquisition, for the same release and natural resource.

(5) A person shall not be required under this part to undertake response activity for a permitted release. Recovery by any person for response activity costs or damages resulting from a permitted release shall be pursuant to other applicable law, in lieu of this part. With respect to a permitted release, this subsection does not affect or modify the obligations or liability of any person under any other state law, including common law, for damages, injury, or loss resulting from a release of a hazardous substance or for response activity or the costs of response activity.

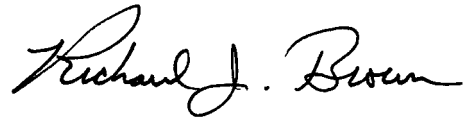
(6) If the department determines that there may be an imminent and substantial endangerment to the public health, safety, or welfare, or to the environment because of an actual or threatened release from a facility, the attorney general may bring an action against any person who is liable under section 20126 or any other appropriate person to secure the relief that may be necessary to abate the danger or threat. The court has jurisdiction to grant such relief as the public interest and the equities of the case may require.

(7) The costs recoverable under this section may be recovered in an action brought by the state or any other person.

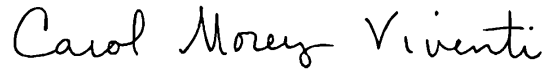
Enacting section 1. This amendatory act does not take effect unless all of the following bills of the 95th Legislature are enacted into law:

- (a) Senate Bill No. 1345.
- (b) Senate Bill No. 1346.
- (c) Senate Bill No. 1348.
- (d) House Bill No. 6360.
- (e) House Bill No. 6363.

This act is ordered to take immediate effect.



Clerk of the House of Representatives



Secretary of the Senate

Approved

Governor