
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1966 Session of
2014

INTRODUCED BY R. MILLER, MILLARD, KNOWLES, PICKETT, GINGRICH,
M. K. KELLER, GODSHALL, ROCK, COHEN, EVERETT AND GILLEN,
JANUARY 22, 2014

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY,
JANUARY 22, 2014

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of November 26, 1978 (P.L.1375, No.325),
2 entitled, as amended, "An act providing for the regulation
3 and safety of dams and reservoirs, water obstructions and
4 encroachments; consolidating and clarifying the programs of
5 the Department of Environmental Resources and Navigation
6 Commission for the Delaware River; establishing penalties and
7 repealing certain acts," further providing for definitions,
8 for proof of financial responsibility and for duties of
9 owners.

10 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
11 hereby enacts as follows:

12 Section 1. Section 3 of the act of November 26, 1978
13 (P.L.1375, No.325), known as the Dam Safety and Encroachments
14 Act, amended October 23, 1979 (P.L.204, No.70) and May 16, 1985
15 (P.L.32, No.15), is amended to read:

16 Section 3. Definitions.

17 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
18 have, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, the
19 meanings given to them in this section:

20 "Appurtenant works." Include, but are not limited to, such

1 structures as spillways, either in the dam or separate
2 therefrom; low level outlet works; and conduits such as tunnels,
3 pipelines or penstocks through the dam or its abutments.

4 "Body of water." Any natural or artificial lake, pond,
5 reservoir, swamp, marsh or wetland.

6 "Category 1 dam." A regulated dam or reservoir with a hazard
7 potential that poses any of the following:

8 (1) A risk to a substantial number of homes, businesses
9 or schools.

10 (2) A risk of excessive economic loss, such as extensive
11 residential, commercial or agricultural damage or substantial
12 inconvenience.

13 "Category 2 dam." A regulated dam or reservoir with a hazard
14 potential that poses any of the following:

15 (1) A risk to a small number of homes or small
16 businesses.

17 (2) A risk of appreciable economic loss, such as limited
18 residential, commercial or agricultural damage or moderate
19 public inconvenience.

20 "Construct." To erect, build, place or deposit, including
21 preliminary preparation of a site for construction.

22 "Dam." Any artificial barrier, together with its appurtenant
23 works, constructed for the purpose of impounding or storing
24 water or any other fluid or semifluid; or any refuse bank fill
25 or structure for highway, railroad or other purposes which does
26 or may impound water or any other fluid or semifluid.

27 "Department." The Department of Environmental Resources of
28 the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

29 "Encroachment." Any structure or activity which in any
30 manner changes, expands or diminishes the course, current or

1 cross-section of any watercourse, floodway or body of water.

2 "Hearing board." The Environmental Hearing Board.

3 ["High hazard dam." Any dam so located as to endanger
4 populated areas downstream by its failure.]

5 "Navigation Commission." The Navigation Commission for the
6 Delaware River or its navigable tributaries.

7 "Operation." Elements of the use, control and functioning of
8 a facility which may affect primarily the storage, release or
9 flow of water, the structural safety of a facility or
10 navigation, with due consideration of the other purposes of this
11 act.

12 "Owner." Any person who owns, controls, operates, maintains,
13 or manages a dam or reservoir, water obstruction or
14 encroachment.

15 "Person." Includes any natural person, partnership,
16 association, corporation, municipality, municipal authority,
17 receiver or trustee and any department, board, commission or
18 authority of the Commonwealth. Whenever used in a section
19 prescribing and imposing a penalty or sanction, the term
20 "person" shall include the members of an association and the
21 officers of a corporation, municipality or municipal authority.

22 "Regulated dam." A dam so located as to pose a hazard to
23 populated areas downstream by its failure.

24 "Reservoir." Any basin which contains or will contain the
25 water or other fluid or semifluid impounded by a dam.

26 "Safety." Security from the risk or threat of significant
27 loss or injury to life, health, property and the environment.

28 "Water obstruction." Includes any dike, bridge, culvert,
29 wall, wing wall, fill, pier, wharf, embankment, abutment or
30 other structure located in, along, across or projecting into any

1 watercourse, floodway or body of water.

2 "Watercourse" or "stream." Any channel of conveyance of
3 surface water having a defined bed and banks, whether natural or
4 artificial, with perennial or intermittent flow.

5 Section 2. Section 11 of the act, amended October 23, 1979
6 (P.L.204, No.70), is amended to read:

7 Section 11. Proof of financial responsibility.

8 (a) As a requirement for approval of a permit under this act
9 for any [category of] Category 1 dam, water obstruction or
10 encroachment which may present a substantial potential risk to
11 life or property, the Environmental Quality Board may, by
12 regulation, authorize the department to require proof of
13 financial responsibility or security assuring the proper
14 construction, operation, maintenance and termination of such
15 projects.

16 (b) As proof of such responsibility or security, the
17 regulations may require one or more of the following:

18 (1) a Certificate of Public Convenience from the Public
19 Utility Commission if the owner of the proposed facility is
20 subject to regulation under the act of May 28, 1937
21 (P.L.1053, No.286), known as the "Public Utility Law";

22 (2) ownership or management of the facility by an agency
23 of the Federal, interstate, State, county or municipal
24 government; or

25 (3) a bond or other legal device of a form acceptable to
26 the department, payable to the Commonwealth, which guarantees
27 proper construction, repair, operation and maintenance,
28 inspections and monitoring of the facility and removal, if
29 necessary. [The] For a Category 1 dam, the amount of such
30 shall be sufficient to cover all costs of entry, correction,

1 repair, operation, maintenance, inspection, monitoring or
2 removal of the facility by the Commonwealth in the event of
3 failure of the owner to comply with the provisions of this
4 act, or any regulation, permit or order issued hereunder.

5 (c) The Commonwealth may seek reimbursement of incurred
6 necessary costs if the owner fails to properly construct,
7 operate, maintain or remove any Category 1 dam, Category 2 dam
8 or any other dam subject to this act.

9 Section 3. Section 13 of the act, amended May 16, 1985
10 (P.L.32, No.15), is amended to read:

11 Section 13. Duties of owners.

12 (a) The owner of any dam, water obstruction or encroachment
13 shall have the legal duty to:

14 (1) monitor, operate and maintain the facility in a safe
15 condition in accordance with the regulations, terms and
16 conditions of permits, approved operating plans and orders of
17 the department issued pursuant to this act;

18 (2) conduct periodic inspections and analyses, as
19 reasonably required by the department considering the type of
20 facility and degree of potential hazard, and as required
21 submit certified reports regarding the condition of the
22 facility to the department: Provided, That in lieu of
23 certified reports from the owner, the department may accept
24 reports of equivalent inspections prepared by governmental
25 agencies;

26 (3) immediately notify the department and responsible
27 authorities in downstream communities of any condition which
28 threatens the safety of the facility, and take all necessary
29 actions to protect life and property, including any action
30 required under an emergency plan or department order issued

1 pursuant to this act; and

2 (4) prior to discontinuing use or abandonment, remove
3 all or part of the facility and take other actions necessary
4 to protect safety and the environment in a manner approved by
5 the department.

6 (b) In addition to the duties of subsection (a), the owner
7 of any [high hazard] regulated dam which has been classified as
8 such by the Department of Environmental Resources shall post
9 notices in public places in any area which might be affected by
10 the failure of the dam.

11 Section 4. This act shall take effect in 60 days.