

STATE OF NEW YORK

672

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

(Prefiled)

January 8, 2025

Introduced by Sen. HINCHEY -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Environmental Conservation

AN ACT to amend the environmental conservation law, in relation to environmental restoration projects; and to repeal certain provisions of such law relating thereto

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Section 56-0501 of the environmental conservation law is
2 amended by adding a new subdivision 3 to read as follows:

3 3. Beginning in state fiscal year two thousand twenty-five--two thou-
4 sand twenty-six, environmental restoration projects may be funded within
5 available appropriations.

6 § 2. Subdivision 1 of section 56-0502 of the environmental conserva-
7 tion law is REPEALED.

8 § 3. Subdivisions 1-a and 5 of section 56-0502 of the environmental
9 conservation law, subdivision 1-a as added and subdivision 5 as amended
10 by section 2 of part D of chapter 577 of the laws of 2004, are amended
11 and a new subdivision 1 is added to read as follows:

12 1. "Contaminant" shall mean hazardous waste as defined in section
13 27-1301 of this chapter, petroleum as defined in section one hundred
14 seventy-two of the navigation law, and emerging contaminants as defined
15 in section eleven hundred twelve of the public health law.

16 1-a. "Contamination" or "contaminated" shall [~~have the same meaning as~~
17 ~~provided in section 27-1405 of this chapter~~] mean the presence of a
18 contaminant in any environmental media, including soil, surface water,
19 groundwater, air, or indoor air.

20 5. "Municipality", for purposes of this title, shall have the same
21 meaning as provided in subdivision fifteen of section 56-0101 of this
22 article, except that such term shall not refer to a municipality that
23 [~~generated, transported, or disposed of, arranged for, or that caused~~

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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~~the generation, transportation, or disposal of contamination located at real property proposed to be investigated or to be remediated under an environmental restoration project. For purposes of this title, the term municipality includes a municipality acting in partnership with a community-based organization~~, through deliberate action or inaction, intentionally or recklessly caused or contributed to contamination, outside of its performance of governmental functions, which threatens public health or the environment, at real property to be investigated or remediated under an environmental restoration project.

§ 4. Paragraph (c) of subdivision 2 of section 56-0503 of the environmental conservation law, as amended by section 38 of part BB of chapter 56 of the laws of 2015, is amended to read as follows:

(c) A provision that the municipality shall assist in identifying a responsible party by searching local records, including property tax rolls, or document reviews, and if, in accordance with the required departmental approval of any settlement with a responsible party, any responsible party payments become available to the municipality, before, during or after the completion of an environmental restoration project, which were not included when the state share was calculated pursuant to this section, ~~[the state assistance share shall be recalculated, and]~~ the value of such settlement shall be used by the municipality to fund its municipal share, and the state assistance share shall not be recalculated, to the extent that the total of all such settlement amounts is equal to or less than the municipal share. To the extent the total of all such settlement amounts exceeds the municipal share, the municipality shall pay such exceedance to the state, for deposit into the environmental restoration project account of the hazardous waste remedial fund established under section ninety-seven-b of the state finance law~~[, the difference between the original state assistance payment and the recalculated state share. Recalculation of the state share shall be done each time a payment from a responsible party is received by the municipality];~~

§ 5. Paragraphs (a), (d), and (e) of subdivision 1 of section 56-0505 of the environmental conservation law, as amended by section 5 of part D of chapter 1 of the laws of 2003, are amended and two new paragraphs (f) and (g) are added to read as follows:

(a) the benefit to the environment and public health realized by the expeditious remediation of the property proposed to be subject to such project;

(d) real property in a designated brownfield opportunity area pursuant to section nine hundred seventy-r of the general municipal law or real property in a disadvantaged community pursuant to subdivision five of section 75-0101 of this chapter; ~~[and]~~

(e) the opportunity for other funding sources to be available for the investigation or remediation of such property, including, but not limited to, enforcement actions against responsible parties (other than the municipality to which state assistance was provided under this title; or a successor in title, lender, or lessee who was not otherwise a responsible party prior to such municipality taking title to the property), state assistance payments pursuant to title thirteen of article twenty-seven of this chapter, and the existence of private parties willing to remediate such property using private funding sources. Highest priority shall be granted to projects for which other such funding sources are not available~~[,]~~ excluding state or federal funds for the investigation or remediation project received or to be received by the municipality;

1 (f) for drinking water contamination sites as defined in section
2 27-1201 of this chapter, any requirements made by the commissioner of
3 health pursuant to section 27-1205 of this chapter, for a municipally
4 owned public water system to take action to reduce exposure to an emerg-
5 ing contaminant or contaminants; and

6 (g) any such other criteria deemed appropriate by the department.

7 § 6. Subdivision 2 of section 56-0505 of the environmental conserva-
8 tion law is REPEALED.

9 § 7. Subdivisions 3, 4, and 5 of section 56-0505 of the environmental
10 conservation law are renumbered subdivisions 2, 3, and 4 and subdivision
11 2, as amended by section 5 of part D of chapter 1 of the laws of 2003
12 and as renumbered by this section, is amended to read as follows:

13 2. The remediation objective of an environmental restoration remedi-
14 ation project shall meet the same standard for protection of public
15 health and the environment that applies to remedial actions undertaken
16 pursuant to ~~[section]~~ sections 27-1313 and 27-1205 of this chapter.

17 § 8. Subdivision 3 of section 56-0509 of the environmental conserva-
18 tion law, as amended by section 4 of part D of chapter 577 of the laws
19 of 2004, is amended to read as follows:

20 3. The state shall indemnify and save harmless any municipality[~~7~~]
21 that completes an environmental restoration remediation project in
22 compliance with the terms and conditions of a state assistance contract
23 or written agreement pursuant to subdivision three of section 56-0503 of
24 this title providing such assistance and any successor in title, lessee,
25 or lender ~~[identified in paragraph (a) of subdivision one of this~~
26 ~~section in the amount of any judgment or settlement, obtained against~~
27 ~~such municipality, successor in title, lessee, or lender in any court~~
28 ~~for any common law cause of action arising out of the presence of any~~
29 ~~contamination in or on property at anytime before the effective date of~~
30 ~~a contract entered into pursuant to this title] for judgments or settle-~~
31 ments obtained against such municipality, successor in title, lessee, or
32 lender in any court for any common law cause of action arising out of
33 municipal actions related to the implementation of the environmental
34 restoration remediation project. Such municipality, successor in title,
35 lessee, or lender shall be entitled to representation by the attorney
36 general, unless the attorney general determines, or a court of competent
37 jurisdiction determines, that such representation would constitute a
38 conflict of interest, in which case the attorney general shall certify
39 to the comptroller that such party is entitled to private counsel of its
40 choice, and reasonable attorneys' fees and expenses shall be reimbursed
41 by the state. Any settlement of such an action shall be subject to the
42 approval of the attorney general as to form and amount, and this subdi-
43 vision shall not apply to any settlement of any such action which has
44 not received such approval.

45 § 9. Notwithstanding subdivisions a, b, and c of section 32 of chapter
46 413 of the laws of 1996, a memorandum of understanding shall not be
47 required to make available twenty million dollars (\$20,000,000) from the
48 Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act of 1996 for state assistance payments to
49 municipalities for environmental remediation in accordance with title 5
50 of article 56 of the environmental conservation law.

51 § 10. This act shall take effect immediately.