

6145

2009-2010 Regular Sessions

I N S E N A T E

August 31, 2009

Introduced by Sen. SCHNEIDERMAN -- read twice and ordered printed, and  
when printed to be committed to the Committee on Rules

AN ACT to amend the environmental conservation law, in relation to  
enforcement of the freshwater wetland law

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEM-  
BLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1 Section 1. Section 71-2303 of the environmental conservation law, as  
2 amended by chapter 654 of the laws of 1977, is amended to read as  
3 follows:  
4 S 71-2303. Violation; penalties.  
5 1. Administrative sanctions. A. Any person who violates, disobeys or  
6 disregards any provision of article twenty-four, including title five  
7 and section 24-0507 [thereof] OF THIS CHAPTER or any rule or regulation,  
8 local law or ordinance, permit or order issued pursuant thereto, shall  
9 be liable to the people of the state for a civil penalty [of] not to  
10 exceed [three] TEN thousand dollars for every such violation, to be  
11 assessed, after a hearing or opportunity to be heard upon due notice and  
12 with the rights to specification of the charges and representation by  
13 counsel at such hearing, by the commissioner or local government. EACH  
14 VIOLATION SHALL BE A SEPARATE AND DISTINCT VIOLATION, AND, IN THE CASE  
15 OF A CONTINUING VIOLATION, EACH DAY'S CONTINUANCE THEREOF SHALL BE  
16 DEEMED A SEPARATE AND DISTINCT VIOLATION. Such penalty may be recovered  
17 in an action brought by the attorney general at the request and in the  
18 name of the commissioner or local government in any court of competent  
19 jurisdiction. Such civil penalty may be released or compromised by the  
20 commissioner or local government before the matter has been referred to  
21 the attorney general; and where such matter has been referred to the  
22 attorney general, any such penalty may be released or compromised and  
23 any action commenced to recover the same may be settled and discontinued  
24 by the attorney general with the consent of the commissioner or local  
25 government. [In addition,]

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

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1 B. UPON DETERMINING THAT DAMAGE TO THE FUNCTIONS OR BENEFITS OF FRESH-  
2 WATER WETLANDS IS OCCURRING OR IS IMMINENT AS A RESULT OF ANY VIOLATION  
3 OF ARTICLE TWENTY-FOUR OF THIS CHAPTER, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO (I)  
4 ACTIVITY TAKING PLACE REQUIRING A PERMIT UNDER ARTICLE TWENTY-FOUR OF  
5 THIS CHAPTER BUT FOR WHICH NO PERMIT HAS BEEN GRANTED OR (II) FAILURE ON  
6 THE PART OF A PERMITTEE TO ADHERE TO PERMIT CONDITIONS, the commissioner  
7 or local government shall have power[, following a hearing held in  
8 conformance with the procedures set forth in section 71-1709 of this  
9 chapter,] to direct the violator to cease [his violation of] AND DESIST  
10 FROM VIOLATING the act [and]. IN SUCH CASES THE VIOLATOR SHALL BE  
11 PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD WITHIN TEN DAYS OF RECEIPT OF THE  
12 NOTICE TO CEASE AND DESIST.

13 C. FOLLOWING A HEARING PURSUANT TO SECTION 71-1709 OF THIS ARTICLE,  
14 THE COMMISSIONER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT SHALL HAVE THE POWER TO DIRECT THE  
15 VIOLATOR TO CEASE AND DESIST FROM VIOLATING THE ACT AND to restore the  
16 affected freshwater wetland OR AREA IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT THERETO to its  
17 condition prior to the violation, insofar as that is possible within a  
18 reasonable time and under the supervision of the commissioner or local  
19 government. Any such order of the commissioner or local government shall  
20 be enforceable in an action brought by the attorney general at the  
21 request and in the name of the commissioner or local government in any  
22 court of competent jurisdiction. Any civil penalty or order issued by  
23 the commissioner or local government pursuant to this subdivision shall  
24 be reviewable in a proceeding pursuant to article seventy-eight of the  
25 civil practice law and rules.

26 2. Criminal sanctions. Any person who violates any provision of arti-  
27 cle twenty-four of this chapter, including any rule or regulation, local  
28 law or ordinance, permit or order issued pursuant thereto, shall, in  
29 addition, for the first offense, be guilty of a violation punishable by  
30 a fine of not less than five hundred nor more than [one] FIVE thousand  
31 dollars; for a second and each subsequent offense [he] SUCH PERSON shall  
32 be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than one  
33 thousand nor more than [two] TEN thousand dollars or a term of imprison-  
34 ment of not less than fifteen days nor more than six months or both.  
35 [Instead] IN ADDITION TO OR INSTEAD of these punishments, any offender  
36 may be punishable by being ordered by the court to restore the affected  
37 freshwater wetland OR AREA IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT THERETO to its condition  
38 prior to the offense, insofar as that is possible. The court shall spec-  
39 ify a reasonable time for the completion of such restoration, which  
40 shall be effected under the supervision of the commissioner or local  
41 government. Each offense shall be a separate and distinct offense and,  
42 in the case of a continuing offense, each day's continuance thereof  
43 shall be deemed a separate and distinct offense.

44 S 2. This act shall take effect on the first of December next succeed-  
45 ing the date on which it shall have become a law.