

STATE OF NEW YORK

5097

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

February 11, 2021

Introduced by M. of A. ABINANTI -- read once and referred to the Committee on Environmental Conservation

AN ACT to amend the environmental conservation law, in relation to environmental quality review

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

1 Section 1. Legislative findings. 1. The legislature hereby finds and
2 declares that proposed actions may have adverse environmental impacts
3 upon surrounding communities and that such impacts may be inconsistent
4 with smart growth initiatives and other regional planning initiatives
5 undertaken in these areas and may affect the long-term environmental and
6 economic sustainability of New York.

7 2. The legislature further finds and declares that it shall be the
8 policy of the state of New York that the regional impacts of proposed
9 actions shall be considered at the initial stages of the environmental
10 review process.

11 § 2. Subdivision 4 of section 8-0109 of the environmental conservation
12 law, as amended by chapter 219 of the laws of 1990, the fourth undesig-
13 nated paragraph as amended by chapter 238 of the laws of 1991 and the
14 fifth undesignated paragraph as amended by chapter 641 of the laws of
15 2005, is amended to read as follows:

16 4. (a) As early as possible in the formulation of a proposal for an
17 action, the responsible agency shall make an initial determination
18 whether an environmental impact statement need be prepared for the
19 action. When an action is to be carried out or approved by two or more
20 agencies, such determination shall be made as early as possible after
21 the designation of the lead agency.

22 (b) In making such initial determination, the responsible agency
23 and/or applicant shall consider whether such action may have a signif-
24 icant effect on the environment that would adversely impact the health,
25 safety, and public welfare of an adjoining municipality without juris-

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

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1 diction over the action; if the action may cause or increase such
2 adverse environmental impacts, such municipality shall, upon request, be
3 designated as a co-lead agency for the review of the action.

4 (c) With respect to actions involving the issuance to an applicant of
5 a permit or other entitlement, the agency shall notify the applicant in
6 writing of its initial determination specifying therein the basis for
7 such determination. Notice of the initial determination along with
8 appropriate supporting findings on agency actions shall be kept on file
9 in the main office of the agency for public inspection.

10 (d) If the agency determines that such statement is required, the
11 agency or the applicant at its option shall prepare or cause to be
12 prepared a draft environmental impact statement. If the applicant does
13 not exercise the option to prepare such statement, the agency shall
14 prepare it, cause it to be prepared, or terminate its review of the
15 proposed action. Such statement shall describe the proposed action and
16 reasonable alternatives to the action, and briefly discuss, on the basis
17 of information then available, the remaining items required to be
18 submitted by subdivision two of this section. The purpose of a draft
19 environmental statement is to relate environmental considerations to the
20 inception of the planning process, to inform the public and other public
21 agencies as early as possible about proposed actions that may signif-
22 icantly affect the quality of the environment, and to solicit comments
23 which will assist the agency in the decision making process in determin-
24 ing the environmental consequences of the proposed action. The draft
25 statement should resemble in form and content the environmental impact
26 statement to be prepared after comments have been received and consid-
27 ered pursuant to subdivision two of this section; however, the length
28 and detail of the draft environmental statement will necessarily reflect
29 the preliminary nature of the proposal and the early stage at which it
30 is prepared.

31 (e) For any action for which the agency determines that such statement
32 is not required and which would take place in a special groundwater
33 protection area, as defined in section 55-0107 of this chapter, the
34 agency shall show how such action would or would not be consistent with
35 the comprehensive management plan of the special groundwater protection
36 program, as implemented by the commissioner pursuant to article fifty-
37 five of this chapter.

38 (f) The draft statement shall be filed with the department or other
39 designated agencies and shall be circulated to federal, state, regional
40 and local agencies having an interest in the proposed action and to
41 interested members of the public for comment, as may be prescribed by
42 the commissioner pursuant to section 8-0113 of this article. In addi-
43 tion, unless impracticable, the draft statement shall be posted on a
44 publicly-available Internet website. The website posting of such draft
45 statement may be discontinued when the environmental impact statement is
46 posted pursuant to subdivision six of this section.

47 (g) The initial determination with respect to the significant effect
48 on the environment of an adjoining municipality without jurisdiction
49 over the proposed action shall be reviewable pursuant to article seven-
50 ty-eight of the civil practice law and rules.

51 § 3. This act shall take effect immediately.