

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1993

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SENATE BILL 571*

Environment and Natural Resources Committee Substitute Adopted 4/26/93

Short Title: Dam Safety Law Improvements.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to: Finance.

March 25, 1993

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO AMEND THE DAM SAFETY LAW OF 1967 TO MAKE IT MORE EFFECTIVE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. G.S. 143-215.24 reads as rewritten:

"§ 143-215.24. Declaration of purpose.

It is the purpose of this Part to provide for the certification and inspection of dams in the interest of public health, safety, and welfare, in order to reduce the risk of failure of dams; to prevent injuries to persons, damage to downstream property and loss of reservoir storage; and to ensure maintenance of minimum stream flows below such dams of adequate quantity and quality below dams."

Sec. 2. G.S. 143-215.25 reads as rewritten:

"§ 143-215.25. Definitions.

As used in this Part, unless the context otherwise requires:

(1) Repealed by Session Laws 1987, c. 827, s. 175.

(2) 'Dam' means the dam (and appurtenant works) for the impoundment or diversion of water, except that it shall not include:

a. Any dam constructed by the United States Army Corps of Engineers, the Tennessee Valley Authority, or any other department or agency of the United States government, when such department or agency designed or approved plans and supervised construction.

- 1 b. ~~Any dam or flood retarding structure constructed with financial~~
2 ~~assistance from the United States Soil Conservation Service,~~
3 ~~when said agency designed or approved plans and supervised~~
4 ~~construction.~~
- 5 e. ~~The exemptions conferred by items a and b of this subdivision~~
6 ~~shall cease when the supervising federal agency relinquishes~~
7 ~~authority for the operation and maintenance to a local entity.~~
- 8 d. ~~Any dam licensed by the Federal Power Commission, or for~~
9 ~~which a license application is pending with the Federal Power~~
10 ~~Commission, or for use in connection with electric generating~~
11 ~~facilities to be constructed pursuant to a certificate of public~~
12 ~~convenience and necessity from the North Carolina Utilities~~
13 ~~Commission, provided that small power producers as defined in~~
14 ~~G.S. 62-3(27a) shall be subject to the provisions of this Part~~
15 ~~even though certified by the North Carolina Utilities~~
16 ~~Commission.~~
- 17 e. ~~Any dam under a single private ownership, providing protection~~
18 ~~only to land or other property under such ownership, and posing~~
19 ~~no threat to life or property below the property under such~~
20 ~~single ownership.~~
- 21 f. ~~Any dam less than 15 feet in height (measured from original~~
22 ~~stream bottom to crest of dam) or whose impoundment capacity~~
23 ~~is less than 10 acre feet.~~
- 24 (3) ~~Repealed by Session Laws 1987, c. 827, s. 175.~~
- 25 (4) ~~'Minimum stream flows' or 'minimum flows' means stream flows of a~~
26 ~~quantity and quality sufficient in the judgment of the Department to~~
27 ~~meet and maintain stream classifications and water quality standards~~
28 ~~established by the Department under G.S. 143-214.1 and applicable to~~
29 ~~the waters affected by the project under consideration. In order to~~
30 ~~ensure that such classifications and standards shall be met and~~
31 ~~maintained, the Department may impose such conditions and~~
32 ~~requirements in orders and written approvals issued under this Part as,~~
33 ~~in its judgment, may be necessary to this end, including conditions and~~
34 ~~requirements relating to the release or discharge of designated flows~~
35 ~~from impoundments, the location or design of water outlets for~~
36 ~~impoundments and of water intakes, the amount and timing of~~
37 ~~withdrawal of water from a reservoir, and the construction of~~
38 ~~submerged weirs or other devices designed to satisfy minimum stream~~
39 ~~flow requirements.~~
- 40 (5) ~~Repealed by Session Laws 1987, c. 827, s. 175."~~
- 41 (1) 'Dam' means a structure and appurtenant works erected to impound or
42 divert water.
- 43 (2) 'Minimum stream flow' or 'minimum flow' means a stream flow of a
44 quantity and quality sufficient in the judgment of the Department to

1 meet and maintain stream classifications and water quality standards
2 established by the Department under G.S. 143-214.1 and applicable to
3 the waters affected by the project under consideration, and to maintain
4 aquatic habitat in the length of the stream that is affected."

5 Sec. 3. Part 3 of Article 21 of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes is
6 amended by adding a new section to read:

7 **"§ 143-215.25A. Exempt dams.**

8 (a) Except as otherwise provided in this Part, this Part does not apply to:

9 (1) Any dam constructed by the United States Army Corps of Engineers,
10 the Tennessee Valley Authority, or any other department or agency of
11 the United States government, when such department or agency
12 designed or approved plans and supervised construction.

13 (2) Any dam or flood-retarding structure constructed with financial
14 assistance from the United States Soil Conservation Service, when said
15 agency designed or approved plans and supervised construction.

16 (3) Any dam licensed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, or
17 for which a license application is pending with the Federal Energy
18 Regulatory Commission, or for use in connection with electric
19 generating facilities to be constructed pursuant to a certificate of public
20 convenience and necessity from the North Carolina Utilities
21 Commission, provided that small power producers as defined in G.S.
22 62-3(27a) shall be subject to the provisions of this Part even though
23 certified by the North Carolina Utilities Commission.

24 (4) Any dam under a single private ownership, providing protection only
25 to land or other property under such ownership, and posing no threat to
26 life or property below the property under such single ownership.

27 (5) Any dam that is less than 15 feet in height or that has an impoundment
28 capacity of less than 10 acre-feet, unless the Department determines
29 that failure of the dam could result in either loss of life or property
30 damage in excess of two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000).

31 (b) The exemption from this Part for a dam described in subdivisions (1) and (2)
32 of subsection (a) of this section does not apply after the supervising federal agency
33 relinquishes authority for the operation and maintenance of the dam to a local entity."

34 Sec. 4. G.S. 143-215.26 reads as rewritten:

35 **"§ 143-215.26. Construction of dams.**

36 (a) No person shall begin the construction of any dam until at least 10 days after
37 filing with the Department a statement concerning its height, impoundment capacity,
38 purpose, location and other information required by the Department. ~~Persons proposing~~
39 ~~construction described in G.S. 143-215.25, subparagraphs (2)e and f will~~ A person who
40 constructs a dam, including a dam that is otherwise exempt from this Part under
41 subdivisions (4) or (5) of G.S. 143-215.25A(a), shall comply with the malaria control
42 requirements of the Department. If on the basis of this information the Department is of
43 the opinion that the proposed dam is not exempt from the provisions of this Part, it shall
44 so notify the applicant, and construction shall not be commenced until a full application

1 is filed by the applicant and approved as provided by G.S. 143-215.29. The Department
2 may also require of applicants so notified the filing of such additional information as it
3 deems necessary, including, but not limited to, streamflow and rainfall data, maps, plans
4 and specifications. Every applicant for approval of a dam subject to the provisions of
5 this Part shall also file with the Department the certificate of an engineer ~~or contractor~~
6 legally qualified in the State of North Carolina that he is responsible for the design of
7 the dam, and that said design is safe and adequate. ~~Should the applicant have a~~
8 ~~professional engineering staff the certificate of a registered professional engineer member of~~
9 ~~that staff legally qualified in the State of North Carolina will constitute compliance.~~

10 (b) When an application has been completed pursuant to the preceding
11 subsection, the Department shall refer copies of the completed application papers to the
12 State Health Director, the Wildlife Resources Commission, the ~~Board~~ Department of
13 Transportation, and ~~such~~ other State and local agencies as it deems appropriate for
14 review and comment."

15 Sec. 5. G.S. 143-214.28A reads as rewritten:

16 "**§ 143-215.28A. Application fees.**

17 (a) In accordance with G.S. 143-215.3(a)(1a), the Commission may establish a
18 fee schedule for processing applications for approvals of ~~construction, repair, alteration,~~
19 construction or removal of dams issued under this Part. In establishing the fee schedule,
20 the Commission shall consider the administrative and personnel costs incurred by the
21 Department for processing the applications and for related compliance activities. The
22 total amount of fees collected in any fiscal year may not exceed one-third of the total
23 personnel and administrative costs incurred by the Department for processing the
24 applications and for related compliance activities in the prior fiscal year. An approval
25 fee may not exceed the larger of two hundred dollars (\$200.00) or two percent (2%) of
26 the actual cost of construction or removal of the applicable dam. The provisions of G.S.
27 143-215.3(a)(1b) do not apply to these fees.

28 (b) The Dam Safety Account is established as a nonreverting account within the
29 Department and shall be administered by the State Treasurer. Fees collected under this
30 section shall be credited to the Account and shall be applied to the costs of
31 administering this Part."

32 Sec. 6. G.S. 143-215.31 reads as rewritten:

33 "**§ 143-215.31. Supervision over maintenance and operation of dams.**

34 (a) The Commission shall have jurisdiction and supervision over the
35 maintenance and operation of dams to safeguard life and property and to satisfy
36 minimum streamflow requirements. The Commission is hereby authorized to adopt such
37 standards for maintenance and operation of dams as may be necessary for the purposes
38 of this Part. In its discretion the Commission may vary the standards applicable to
39 various dams, giving due consideration to the minimum flow requirements of the
40 stream, the type and location of the structure, the hazards to which it may be exposed,
41 and the peril of life and property in the event of failure of a dam to perform its function.

42 (b) The Department may impose any condition or requirement in orders and
43 written approvals issued under this Part that is necessary to ensure that stream
44 classifications, water quality standards, and aquatic habitat requirements are met and

1 maintained, including conditions and requirements relating to the release or discharge of
2 designated flows from dams, the location and design of water intakes and outlets, the
3 amount and timing of the withdrawal of water from a reservoir, and the construction of
4 submerged weirs or other devices intended to maintain minimum stream flows."

5 Sec. 7. G.S. 143-215.32 reads as rewritten:

6 **"§ 143-215.32. Inspection of dams.**

7 (a) The Department is hereby authorized at any time to inspect any dam upon
8 receipt of a written request of any affected person or agency, or upon a motion of the
9 Environmental Management Commission. Within the limits of available funds the
10 Department shall endeavor to provide for inspection of all dams at intervals of
11 approximately five years.

12 (b) If the Department upon inspection finds that any dam is not sufficiently
13 strong, or is not maintained in good repair or operating condition, or is dangerous to life
14 or property, or does not satisfy minimum streamflow requirements, the Department
15 shall cause such evidence to be presented to the Commission and the Commission may
16 issue an order directing the owner or owners of the dam to make at his or her expense
17 maintenance, alterations, repairs, reconstruction, change in construction or location, or
18 removal as may be deemed necessary by the Commission within a time limited by the
19 order, not less than 90 days from the date of issuance of each order, except in the case of
20 extreme danger to the safety of life or property, as provided by subsection (c) of this
21 section.

22 (c) If at any time the condition of any dam becomes so dangerous to the safety of
23 life or property, in the opinion of the Environmental Management Commission, as not
24 to permit sufficient time for issuance of an order in the manner provided by subsection
25 (b) of this section, the Environmental Management Commission may immediately take
26 such measures as may be essential to provide emergency protection to life and property,
27 including the lowering of the level of a reservoir by releasing water impounded or the
28 destruction in whole or in part of the dam or reservoir. The Environmental Management
29 Commission may recover the costs of such measures from the owner or owners by
30 appropriate legal action.

31 (d) ~~For the purposes of this section the word "dam" shall mean any dam posing a~~
32 ~~present threat to human life or property regardless of its size and impoundment capacity,~~
33 ~~but excepting those dams described in G.S. 143-215.25(2)a, b and d. An order issued~~
34 ~~under this Part shall be served on the owner of the dam as provided in G.S. 1A-1, Rule~~
35 ~~4."~~

36 Sec. 8. G.S. 143-215.33 reads as rewritten:

37 **"§ 143-215.33. Administrative hearing.**

38 A person to whom a ~~decision or an~~ order is issued under this Part may contest the
39 ~~decision or order~~ by filing a contested case petition for a contested case in accordance with
40 G.S. 150B-23 within 10 days after ~~receiving notice, by personal service or by registered or~~
41 ~~certified mail, of the Commission's decision or order. the order is served. A person may~~
42 contest any other decision under this Part by filing a contested case petition within 30
43 days after the notice of the decision is served."

44 Sec. 9. G.S. 143-215.36(b) reads as rewritten:

1 "(b) Civil Penalties. –

- 2 (1) The Secretary may assess a civil penalty of not less than one hundred
3 dollars (\$100.00) nor more than ~~two five hundred fifty~~ dollars ~~(\$250.00)~~
4 ~~(\$500.00)~~ against any person who violates any provisions of this Part,
5 a rule implementing this Part, or an order issued under this Part.
- 6 (2) If any action or failure to act for which a penalty may be assessed
7 under this Part is willful, the Secretary may assess a penalty not to
8 exceed ~~two five hundred fifty~~ dollars ~~(\$250.00)~~ ~~(\$500.00)~~ per day for
9 each day of violation.
- 10 (3) In determining the amount of the penalty, the Secretary shall consider
11 the factors set out in G.S. 143B-282.1(b). The procedures set out in
12 G.S. 143B-282.1 shall apply to civil penalty assessments that are
13 presented to the Commission for final agency decision.
- 14 (4) The Secretary shall notify any person assessed a civil penalty of the
15 assessment and the specific reasons therefor by registered or certified
16 mail, or by any means authorized by G.S. 1A-1, Rule 4. Contested
17 case petitions shall be filed in accordance with G.S. 150B-23 within 30
18 days of receipt of the notice of assessment.
- 19 (5) Requests for remission of civil penalties shall be filed with the
20 Secretary. Remission requests shall not be considered unless made
21 within 30 days of receipt of the notice of assessment. Remission
22 requests must be accompanied by a waiver of the right to a contested
23 case hearing pursuant to Chapter 150B and a stipulation of the facts on
24 which the assessment was based. Consistent with the limitations in
25 G.S. 143B-282.1(c) and G.S. 143-282.1 (d), remission requests may be
26 resolved by the Secretary and the violator. If the Secretary and the
27 violation are unable to resolve the request, the Secretary shall deliver
28 remission requests and his recommended action to the Committee on
29 Civil Penalty Remissions of the Environmental Management
30 Commission appointed pursuant to G.S. 143B-282.1(c).
- 31 (6) If any civil penalty has not been paid within 30 days after notice of
32 assessment has been served on the violator, the Secretary shall request
33 the Attorney General to institute a civil action in the Superior Court of
34 any county in which the violator resides or has his or its principal place
35 of business to recover the amount of the assessment, unless the
36 violation contests the assessment as provided in subdivision (4) of this
37 subsection, ~~or requests remission of the assessment in whole or in part as~~
38 ~~provided in subdivision (5) of this subsection.~~ subsection. If any civil
39 penalty has not been paid within 30 days after the final agency
40 decision or court order has been served on the violator, the Secretary
41 shall request the Attorney General to institute a civil action in the
42 Superior Court of any county in which the violator resides or has his or
43 its principal place of business to recover the amount of the assessment.

1 A civil action shall be filed within three years of the date the final
2 agency decision was served on the violator.

3 (7) The Secretary may delegate his powers and duties under this section to
4 the Director of the Division of Land Resources of the Department."

5 Sec. 10. Section 5 of this act becomes effective 30 June 1993. All other
6 sections of this act become effective 1 October 1993.