

Chapter 443

(Senate Bill 324)

AN ACT concerning

**Environment and Natural Resources – Complaints, Inspections, and
Enforcement – Information Maintenance and Reporting**

FOR the purpose of requiring the Department of the Environment to receive and process complaints involving ~~suspected environmental~~ alleged violations of certain air and water quality requirements in a certain manner; requiring the Department of the Environment to keep an electronic record of certain complaints for a certain number of years; requiring the Department of the Environment to maintain and update certain information involving ~~suspected environmental~~ alleged violations of certain air and water quality requirements; requiring the Department of the Environment to update and publish on its website a certain list that includes certain information; requiring the Department of the Environment to develop and maintain a certain website to provide certain complaint, inspection, ~~and~~ enforcement, and sewage overflow information; requiring certain information posted on a certain website to be kept in a certain manner; requiring the Department of Natural Resources to report to the Governor and the General Assembly on or before a certain date each year on information relating to the enforcement of natural resources and conservation laws; declaring the intent of the General Assembly; providing for the construction of this Act; providing for the application of certain provisions of this Act; defining ~~a~~ certain ~~term~~ terms; and generally relating to complaints, inspections, and enforcement under environment and natural resources laws.

BY adding to

Article – Environment

Section 1–305

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2013 Replacement Volume and 2020 Supplement)

BY adding to

Article – Natural Resources

Section 1–211

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2018 Replacement Volume and 2020 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Environment**1–305.**

(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION, THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(2) “~~SUSPECTED~~ ALLEGED VIOLATION” MEANS ~~A SUSPECTED~~ AN ALLEGED VIOLATION OF ANY REQUIREMENT IN THIS ARTICLE OR ANY REGULATION AUTHORIZED BY A PROVISION OF THIS ARTICLE, INCLUDING FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS DELEGATED TO THE STATE.

(3) “COMPLAINT” MEANS A COMPLAINT REGARDING AN ALLEGED VIOLATION OF ANY AIR OR WATER QUALITY REQUIREMENT IN THIS ARTICLE OR ANY AIR OR WATER QUALITY REGULATION AUTHORIZED BY A PROVISION OF THIS ARTICLE, INCLUDING FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS DELEGATED TO THE STATE.

(B) THIS SECTION APPLIES ONLY TO:

(1) BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2021, WATER QUALITY PROGRAMS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT’S WATER AND SCIENCE ADMINISTRATION THAT ARE TRACKED THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT’S ENVIRONMENTAL TRACKING SYSTEM OR A COMPARABLE DATABASE; AND

(2) BEGINNING JUNE 30, 2022:

(i) WATER QUALITY PROGRAMS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT’S LAND AND MATERIALS ADMINISTRATION THAT ARE TRACKED THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT’S ENVIRONMENTAL TRACKING SYSTEM OR A COMPARABLE DATABASE; AND

(ii) AIR QUALITY PROGRAMS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT’S AIR AND RADIATION ADMINISTRATION THAT ARE TRACKED THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT’S ENVIRONMENTAL TRACKING SYSTEM OR A COMPARABLE DATABASE.

~~(B)~~ (C) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL:

(1) RECEIVE AND PROCESS COMPLAINTS THAT INVOLVE ~~SUSPECTED~~ ALLEGED VIOLATIONS;

(2) KEEP AN ELECTRONIC RECORD OF EACH COMPLAINT THAT IS RECEIVED UNDER THIS SECTION FOR 10 YEARS, INCLUDING INFORMATION ON:

(i) THE COUNTY IN WHICH THE ~~SUSPECTED~~ ALLEGED VIOLATION OCCURRED; AND

(II) WHICH ADMINISTRATION WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT IS AUTHORIZED TO ENFORCE THE ~~SUSPECTED~~ ALLEGED VIOLATION; AND

(3) MAINTAIN AND UPDATE, ON AT LEAST A QUARTERLY BASIS, A LIST OF:

(I) NEW COMPLAINTS THAT HAVE BEEN RECEIVED BY THE DEPARTMENT THAT INVOLVE ~~SUSPECTED~~ ALLEGED VIOLATIONS, INCLUDING INFORMATION ON:

1. THE COUNTY IN WHICH THE ~~SUSPECTED~~ ALLEGED VIOLATION OCCURRED; AND

2. WHICH ADMINISTRATION WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT IS AUTHORIZED TO ENFORCE THE ~~SUSPECTED~~ ALLEGED VIOLATION;

(II) COMPLAINTS THAT REMAIN OPEN; AND

(III) COMPLAINTS THAT HAVE BEEN ~~RECENTLY~~ CLOSED.

~~(C)~~ (D) ON AT LEAST A MONTHLY BASIS, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL UPDATE AND PUBLISH ON ITS WEBSITE A LIST OF ~~NEW~~ LEGAL SETTLEMENTS ~~PROPOSED~~ FINALIZED BY THE DEPARTMENT THAT INVOLVE ~~SUSPECTED~~ VIOLATIONS, INCLUDING INFORMATION ON:

(1) THE DATE ~~THE~~ A SETTLEMENT WAS ~~PROPOSED~~ FINALIZED;

(2) THE RELEVANT LAW OR REGULATION THAT IS THE BASIS OF THE ~~SUSPECTED~~ VIOLATION; ~~AND~~

(3) WHICH ADMINISTRATION WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT IS AUTHORIZED TO ENFORCE THE ~~SUSPECTED~~ VIOLATION;

(4) THE NAME OF THE SITE OR REGULATED ENTITY AND THE LOCATION OF THE SITE AT ISSUE;

(5) THE AMOUNT OF ANY PENALTY ASSESSED;

(6) A DESCRIPTION OF THE VIOLATION; AND

(7) A LINK TO A DOWNLOADABLE DOCUMENT CONTAINING THE FINAL SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT.

~~(D)~~ (E) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN A WEBSITE TO PROVIDE:

(1) A LIST OF EACH COMPLAINT RECEIVED BY THE DEPARTMENT THAT INCLUDES ONLY:

(I) THE DATE ON WHICH THE COMPLAINT WAS SUBMITTED;

(II) THE COUNTY IN WHICH THE ~~SUSPECTED~~ ALLEGED VIOLATION OCCURRED;

(III) WHICH ADMINISTRATION WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT IS AUTHORIZED TO ENFORCE THE ~~SUSPECTED~~ ALLEGED VIOLATION; ~~AND~~

(IV) ANY COMPLAINT OR CASE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER; AND

(V) IF A COMPLAINT HAS BEEN CLOSED, THE DATE ON WHICH THE COMPLAINT WAS CLOSED;

(2) A LIST OF EACH INSPECTION THAT HAS BEEN CONDUCTED BY THE DEPARTMENT DURING THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING 365 DAYS UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF A STATE OR FEDERAL LAW OR REGULATION RELATED TO MANAGING OR PROTECTING ~~AMBIENT AIR QUALITY OR WATER QUALITY~~ THE ENVIRONMENT THAT INCLUDES ONLY:

(I) THE NAME OF THE SITE OR REGULATED ENTITY;

(II) THE COUNTY AND, IF READILY AVAILABLE, THE ZIP CODE IN WHICH THE INSPECTION OCCURRED;

(III) ~~THE~~ IF APPLICABLE, THE PERMIT NUMBER ASSOCIATED WITH THE SITE;

(IV) ANY INSPECTION IDENTIFICATION NUMBER;

(V) ~~THE FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTOR ON WHETHER~~ WHETHER THE SITE IS IN COMPLIANCE OR WHETHER ANY ADDITIONAL INVESTIGATION IS NECESSARY;

(VI) THE STATUS OF THE INSPECTION; AND

(VII) ~~WHETHER THE BASIS OF THE INSPECTION INVOLVED AMBIENT AIR QUALITY, WATER QUALITY, OR OTHER MEDIA~~ THE MEDIA BASIS FOR THE INSPECTION;

(3) AN ELECTRONIC LINK OR OTHER MEANS OF DOWNLOADING A DIGITAL COPY, IF READILY AVAILABLE, OF AN INSPECTION REPORT THAT INCLUDES INFORMATION THAT IS LISTED UNDER ITEM (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION IF THE INFORMATION IS MAINTAINED BY THE DEPARTMENT IN ~~A~~ THE ENVIRONMENTAL TRACKING SYSTEM OR A COMPARABLE DATABASE;

(4) A LIST OF EACH ENFORCEMENT ACTION THAT HAS BEEN INITIATED BY THE DEPARTMENT DURING THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING 365 DAYS UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF A STATE OR FEDERAL LAW OR REGULATION RELATED TO PROTECTING OR MANAGING ~~AMBIENT AIR QUALITY OR WATER QUALITY~~ THE ENVIRONMENT THAT INCLUDES ONLY:

(I) WHETHER ANY PENALTIES WERE IMPOSED AND THE AMOUNT OF THE PENALTIES COLLECTED;

(II) WHETHER ANY ORDERS WERE ISSUED;

(III) WHETHER THE CASE WAS REFERRED FOR PROSECUTION OR FURTHER ENFORCEMENT ACTION;

(IV) WHETHER COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE WAS RENDERED;

(V) THE COUNTY AND, IF READILY AVAILABLE, THE ZIP CODE IN WHICH THE ENFORCEMENT ACTION OCCURRED;

(VI) THE ENFORCEMENT ACTION IDENTIFICATION NUMBER;

(VII) ~~THE~~ IF APPLICABLE, THE PERMIT NUMBER; AND

(VIII) WHICH ADMINISTRATION WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT CARRIED OUT THE ENFORCEMENT ACTION; ~~AND~~

(5) A LIST OF EACH VIOLATION DISCOVERED WITHIN THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING 365 DAYS THAT THE DEPARTMENT HAS DEEMED “SIGNIFICANT NONCOMPLIANCE”, OR A “HIGH-PRIORITY VIOLATION”, ~~OR ANY OTHER ELEVATED STATUS OF CONCERN~~ THAT INCLUDES ONLY:

(I) THE DATE ON WHICH THE VIOLATION WAS IDENTIFIED AS ~~AN ELEVATED STATUS OF CONCERN~~ “SIGNIFICANT NONCOMPLIANCE” OR A “HIGH-PRIORITY VIOLATION”;

(II) THE DATE ON WHICH THE ~~FACILITY~~ SITE OR REGULATED ENTITY REGAINED COMPLIANCE, IF APPLICABLE;

(III) THE COUNTY AND, IF READILY AVAILABLE, THE ZIP CODE IN WHICH THE ~~SUSPECTED~~ VIOLATION OCCURRED;

(IV) WHETHER ANY ENFORCEMENT ACTION HAS BEEN INITIATED OR CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUESTED; AND

(V) WHICH ADMINISTRATION WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT IS AUTHORIZED TO ENFORCE THE VIOLATION;

~~(VI)~~ (6) A LIST OF ALL EXPIRED AND ADMINISTRATIVELY CONTINUED ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITS ~~ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT~~ SUBJECT TO THIS SECTION, INCLUDING INFORMATION ON:

~~1.~~ (I) ~~THE FACILITY NAME~~ NAME OF THE PERMITTEE;

~~2.~~ (II) THE EXPIRATION DATE OF THE PERMIT;

~~3.~~ (III) THE PERMIT NUMBER;

~~4.~~ (IV) THE COUNTY AND, IF READILY AVAILABLE, THE ZIP CODE IN WHICH THE FACILITY SITE OR REGULATED ENTITY IS LOCATED; AND

~~5.~~ (V) ANY INFORMATION ON THE STATUS OF THE PERMIT RENEWAL PROCESS, INCLUDING WHETHER AN APPLICATION TO RENEW THE PERMIT HAS BEEN SUBMITTED AND WHETHER THE PERMIT IS DEEMED TO BE EXPIRED OR ADMINISTRATIVELY CONTINUED; ~~AND~~

~~(VI)~~ (7) ALL INFORMATION REQUIRED TO BE POSTED ON THE DEPARTMENT'S WEBSITE IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 4-802 OF THIS ARTICLE; AND

(8) A LIST OF EACH SEWAGE OVERFLOW INCIDENT IN THE STATE, INCLUDING INFORMATION ON:

(I) THE LOCATION OF THE SEWAGE OVERFLOW;

(II) THE ENTITY FROM WHICH THE SEWAGE OVERFLOW ORIGINATED; AND

(III) WHETHER THE SEWAGE WAS TREATED OR RAW SEWAGE.

~~(E)~~ (F) THE INFORMATION POSTED ON THE WEBSITE IN ACCORDANCE WITH ~~SUBSECTION (D)~~ SUBSECTIONS (D) AND (E) OF THIS SECTION SHALL BE:

- (1) KEPT FOR AT LEAST 10 YEARS;
- (2) UPDATED ON AT LEAST A MONTHLY BASIS; AND
- (3) MAINTAINED IN A DATABASE FORMAT TO ENSURE THAT THE INFORMATION IS SEARCHABLE BY CATEGORY OF INFORMATION.

Article – Natural Resources

1–211.

(A) ON OR BEFORE SEPTEMBER 30 EACH YEAR, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 2–1257 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON INFORMATION FOR THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING FISCAL YEAR RELATING TO THE ENFORCEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION LAWS.

(B) THE REPORT SUBMITTED UNDER SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION SHALL INCLUDE:

(1) THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ON A STATEWIDE BASIS:

(I) WITH RESPECT TO THE ENFORCEMENT OF STATE CONSERVATION LAWS, ~~THE TOTAL NUMBER OF:~~

1. ~~INSPECTIONS~~ THE TOTAL NUMBER OF INSPECTIONS CONDUCTED, INCLUDING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF INSPECTIONS CONDUCTED PER NATURAL RESOURCES POLICE OFFICER;

2. ~~CITATIONS~~ THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CITATIONS AND WARNINGS ISSUED; AND

3. ~~VIOLATIONS~~ THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VIOLATIONS THAT LED TO A CONVICTION;

(II) WITH RESPECT TO THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE STATE BOAT ACT, THE TOTAL:

1. NUMBER OF INSPECTIONS;

2. NUMBER OF CITATIONS AND WARNINGS ISSUED, INCLUDING OPERATING–UNDER–THE–INFLUENCE CITATIONS; AND

3. NUMBER OF BOATING ACCIDENTS, INCLUDING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF FATALITIES AND TOTAL DOLLAR AMOUNT OF RESULTING PROPERTY DAMAGE; AND

(III) WITH RESPECT TO ACTIVITIES REPORTED TO THE MARYLAND WILDLIFE CRIME STOPPERS, THE TOTAL NUMBER OF:

1. REPORTED INCIDENTS, INCLUDING THE TOTAL NUMBER THAT LED TO FORMAL CHARGES AND, IF APPLICABLE, CONVICTIONS; AND

2. REWARDS OF FINANCIAL COMPENSATION DISTRIBUTED, INCLUDING THE TOTAL DOLLAR AMOUNT DISTRIBUTED; AND

(2) FOR EACH OF THE EASTERN REGION, SOUTHERN REGION, WESTERN REGION, AND CENTRAL REGION, THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

(I) THE TOTAL NUMBER OF INSPECTIONS RELATING TO EACH OF THE FOLLOWING:

- 1. COMMERCIAL FISHING;**
- 2. RECREATIONAL FISHING;**
- 3. CRABS;**
- 4. OYSTERS;**
- 5. GAME AND WILDLIFE; AND**
- 6. BOATING; AND**

(II) THE TOTAL NUMBER OF:

- 1. OYSTER CITATIONS AND WARNINGS ISSUED;**
- 2. OPERATING-UNDER-THE-INFLUENCE CITATIONS ISSUED; AND**

3. BOATING ACCIDENTS, INCLUDING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF FATALITIES AND THE TOTAL DOLLAR AMOUNT OF RESULTING PROPERTY DAMAGE.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That:

(a) It is the intent of the General Assembly that:

(1) this Act enhance efficiency and reduce the burden on State agencies by taking advantage of modern technology, maximizing collaboration, minimizing redundancy in agency activities, reducing the amount of agency staff time needed to respond to and complete Public Information Act requests, and marshalling nongovernmental resources through the facilitation and enablement of public participation; and

(2) government agencies responsible for implementing this Act rely on, to the maximum extent practicable, existing budgeted resources to implement this Act, including by realizing the efficiencies gained under this Act, reallocating newly available resources, and relying on newly available data systems and technologies to undertake tasks that are currently processed manually.

(b) Nothing in this Act shall be construed to require any unit of State government to undertake additional data collection, publish any confidential information not already subject to disclosure under State law, or perform any additional redaction of information to implement this Act.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2021.

Enacted under Article II, § 17(c) of the Maryland Constitution, May 30, 2021.