CHAPTER 6

Department of Environmental Services

Chapter effective July 1, 2024

Editor's Note

2023 Act No. 60, Sections 1, 2, 13, 14, and 17, provide as follows:

"SECTION 1. On July 1, 2024:

"(1) There is created the Department of Public Health to be headed by a director who is appointed by the Governor pursuant to Section 1‑30‑10, with the advice and consent of the Senate; provided, however, until the Governor appoints the initial director after creation of the Department of Public Health, the Director of the Department of Health and Environmental Control shall serve as the Director of the Department of Public Health.

"(2) There is created the Department of Environmental Services to be headed by a director who is appointed by the Governor pursuant to Section 1‑30‑10, with the advice and consent of the Senate; provided, however, until the Governor appoints the initial director after creation of the Department of Environmental Services, the Director of Environmental Affairs of the Department of Health and Environmental Control shall serve as the Director of the Department of Environmental Services.

"(3) The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control and the South Carolina Board of Health and Environmental Control are abolished.

"(4) The food safety program in the Division of Food and Lead Risk Assessment and the Milk and Dairy Lab of the Department of Health and Environmental Control shall become a division of the Department of Agriculture with the director of that department being deemed the head of the division unless otherwise specified, and all relevant powers and duties assigned to the Department of Health and Environmental Control being transferred to and devolved upon the Department of Agriculture.

"(5) The authority to establish, manage, and operate veterans homes shall be transferred to the Department of Veterans' Affairs, and all powers and duties assigned to the Department of Mental Health regarding veterans homes being transferred to and devolved upon the Department of Veterans' Affairs. To the extent, the Department of Mental Health owns the grounds upon which these veterans homes are located, title shall be transferred to the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

"(6) The hydrology and aquatic nuisance species programs of the Land, Water and Conservation Division of the Department of Natural Resources shall become a division of the Department of Environmental Services, and all relevant powers and duties assigned to the Department of Natural Resources being transferred to and devolved upon the Department of Environmental Services.

"SECTION 2. (A) It is the intent of the General Assembly to restructure and transfer the programs, services, duties, and authority of the Department of Health and Environmental Control into the Department of Public Health or the Department of Environmental Services. Accordingly, the Department of Administration immediately shall commence the process of analyzing the circumstances and determining the best manner to efficiently and effectively restructure and transfer all programs, services, duties, and authority of the Department of Health and Environmental Control to the Department of Public Health or the Department of Environmental Services, consistent with the provisions of this act. The Department of Health and Environmental Control shall cooperate with the Department of Administration and assign such personnel as requested by the Executive Director of the Department of Administration to assist the department and enable it to complete its duties under this SECTION. To complete its duties under this SECTION the Department of Administration shall consult with the existing Director of the Department of Health and Environmental Control and the existing Director of Environmental Affairs of the Department of Health and Environmental Control.

"(B) The Department of Administration's analysis required by this SECTION must include the submission of a report to the General Assembly no later than December 31, 2023, with specific recommendations of statutory changes needed throughout the South Carolina Code of Laws to reflect the restructuring and transfer of the health‑related programs, services, duties, and authority of the Department of Health and Environmental Control to the Department of Public Health and to reflect the restructuring and transfer of the environmental related programs, services, duties, and authority of the Department of Health and Environmental Control to the Department of Environmental Services. The Department of Health and Environmental Control shall assign such legal, programmatic and administrative personnel as requested by the Executive Director of Department of Administration to assist the department in identifying statutory provisions requiring change and in suggesting appropriate language to effectuate required changes. The Code Commissioner shall be available to consult with and assist the Department of Administration in making the recommendations required by this SECTION.

"(C) The Department of Administration may procure such supplies, services, information technology, and experts, including attorneys, as are necessary to perform the requirements of this SECTION. Such procurements are exempt from the purchasing procedures of the South Carolina Consolidated Procurement Code but must be made with as much competition as is practicable. Additionally, if determined necessary, the State Fiscal Accountability Authority shall assign such personnel as requested by the Executive Director of Department of Administration to assist the department in any required procurements. The Department of Health and Environmental Control shall pay the costs of any supplies, services, information technology, and experts, including attorneys, procured pursuant to this subsection."

"SECTION 13. (A) This SECTION is effective upon approval by the Governor.

"(B) The Department of Administration shall identify, select, retain, and procure the services of independent, third‑party experts, consultants, or advisors to analyze the missions and delivery models of all state agencies concerned with the overall public health of the State, as well as certain specific populations including, but not limited to, children and adolescents, newborns, pregnant women, the elderly, disabled, mentally ill, special needs individuals, those with chemical dependencies, the chronically ill, economically disadvantaged, and veterans. This analysis will include, but not be limited to, the Department of Health and Environmental Control and its successor entities, the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services, the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs, and the Department on Aging. Any agencies identified by the Department of Administration as being subject to this analysis shall provide the department with any and all information requested and shall fully participate as requested and required.

"(C) The analysis procured by the Department of Administration shall consider whether structural changes are necessary to improve health services delivery in the State, recognize operational efficiencies, and maximize resource utilization. Structural changes to be analyzed include reorganizations or mergers of existing health agencies, or divisions or components thereof, as well as the establishment of any new health agencies or the privatization of services currently provided by existing health agencies.

"(D) The third‑party experts, consultants, or advisors must make appropriate recommendations based on the analysis required pursuant to this section and the benefits of each recommendation.

"(E) The Department of Administration shall prepare a final report summarizing the aforementioned analysis and recommendations and shall submit the final report to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Chairman of the Medical Affairs Committee, the Chairman of the Medical, Military and Municipal Affairs Committee, the Chairman of the Finance Committee, the Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, and the Governor by April 1, 2024, and shall submit interim reports on October 1, 2023, and January 1, 2024. Procurements by the Department of Administration of all experts, consultants, and advisors pursuant to and required by this SECTION are exempt from the purchasing procedures of the South Carolina Consolidated Procurement Code in Chapter 35, Title 11 of the S.C. Code. If requested by the Executive Director of the Department of Administration, staff from the State Fiscal Accountability Authority's Procurement Services Division shall assist in procuring the necessary services.

"(F) The Department of Health and Human Services shall give support to the Department of Administration in fulfilling the purposes of this SECTION.

"SECTION 14. (A) When the provisions of this act transfer particular state agencies, departments, boards, commissions, committees, or entities, or sections, divisions, or portions thereof (transferring departments), to another state agency, department, division, or entity or make them a part of another department or division (receiving departments), the employees, authorized appropriations, bonded indebtedness, if applicable, real and personal property, assets, and liabilities of the transferring department also are transferred to and become part of the receiving department or division unless otherwise specifically provided. All classified or unclassified personnel of the affected agency, department, board, commission, committee, entity, section, division, or position employed by these transferring departments on the effective date of this act, either by contract or by employment at will, shall become employees of the receiving department or division, with the same compensation, classification, and grade level, as applicable. The Department of Administration shall cause all necessary actions to be taken to accomplish this transfer and shall in consultation with the agency head of the transferring and receiving agencies prescribe the manner in which the transfer provided for in this section shall be accomplished. The Department of Administration's action in facilitating the provisions of this section are ministerial in nature and shall not be construed as an approval process over any of the transfers.

"(B) When an agency, department, entity, or official is transferred to or consolidated with another agency, department, division, entity, or official, regulations promulgated by that transferred agency, department, entity, or official under the authority of former provisions of law pertaining to it are continued and are considered to be promulgated under the authority of present provisions of law pertaining to it. When powers and duties of an agency, department, entity, or official are transferred to and devolved upon another department, agency, or subdivision thereof, the power and duty to promulgate regulations is also transferred to and devolved upon that department, agency, or subdivision thereof.

"(C) References to the names of agencies, departments, entities, or public officials changed by this act, to their duties or functions herein devolved upon other agencies, departments, entities, or officials, or to provisions of law consolidated with or transferred to other parts of the S.C. Code are considered to be and must be construed to mean appropriate references.

"(D) Unless otherwise provided herein or by law, all fines, fees, forfeitures, or revenues imposed or levied by agencies, personnel, or portions thereof, so transferred to other agencies or departments must continue to be used and expended for those purposes provided prior to the effective date of this act. If a portion of these fines, fees, forfeitures, or revenues were required to be used for the support, benefit, or expense of personnel transferred, these funds must continue to be used for these purposes."

"SECTION 17. This act takes effect on July 1, 2024, except that the provisions of SECTION 2 and SECTION 13, relating to the Department of Administration's duties, take effect upon approval by the Governor."

**SECTION 48‑6‑10.** Department of Environmental Services created.

Section effective July 1, 2024.

 (A) There is created the Department of Environmental Services which shall be headed by a director appointed by the Governor, upon the advice and consent of the Senate. The director is subject to removal by the Governor as provided for in Section 1‑3‑240.

 (B) As the governing authority of the department, the director is vested with all authorities and duties as provided for in Section 1‑30‑10.

 (C) The Department of Environmental Services is comprised of:

 (1) the Division of Air Quality;

 (2) the Division of Land and Waste Management;

 (3) the Division of Water;

 (4) the Division of Regional and Laboratory Services, which includes the Office of Emergency Response and the Office of Onsite Wastewater and Enforcement; and

 (5) the Division of Coastal Management.

 (D) The Director of the Department of Environmental Services may realign the bureaus, divisions, offices, and programs to gain additional efficiencies or to better align resources with changes in environmental statutes or regulation.

HISTORY: 2023 Act No. 60 (S.399), Section 4, eff July 1, 2024.

**SECTION 48‑6‑20.** Functions, powers, and duties.

Section effective July 1, 2024.

 (A) The Department of Environmental Services is vested with all the functions, powers, and duties of the environmental divisions, offices, and programs of the Department of Health and Environmental Control on the effective date of this act.

 (B) The department may promulgate regulations necessary to implement the provisions of this chapter.

 (C) The department may apply for and accept funds, grants, gifts, and services from the State, the United States government or any of its agencies, or any other public or private source and may use funds derived from these sources to defray clerical and administrative costs, as may be necessary for carrying out the department's duties.

HISTORY: 2023 Act No. 60 (S.399), Section 4, eff July 1, 2024.

**SECTION 48‑6‑30.** Procedures regarding decisions on permits, licenses, certificates, and other approvals.

Section effective July 1, 2024.

 (A) All decisions of the Department of Environmental Services involving the issuance, denial, renewal, suspension, or revocation of permits, licenses, certificates, or other actions of the department which may give rise to a contested case, except a decision to establish a baseline or setback line, must be made using the procedures set forth in this section. A department decision referenced in this subsection relating to a poultry facility or another animal facility, except a swine facility, also must comply with the provisions of Section 48‑6‑40.

 (B) The department shall comply with all requirements for public notice, receipt of public comments, and public hearings before making a decision. To the maximum extent possible, the department shall use a uniform system of public notice of permit applications, opportunity for public comment, and public hearings.

 (C) In making a decision about a permit, license, certification, or other approval, the department shall take into consideration all material comments received in response to the public notice in determining whether to issue, deny, or condition a permit, license, certification, or other approval. At the time that a decision is made, the department shall issue a written decision and shall base its decision on the administrative record, which must consist of the application and supporting exhibits, all public comments and submissions, and other documents contained in the supporting file for the permit, license, certification, or other approval. The administrative record also may include material readily available at the department, or published materials which are generally available and need not be physically included in the same file as the rest of the record as long as those materials are referred to specifically in the department decision. The department is not required to issue a written decision for issuance of routine permits for which the department has not received adverse public comments.

 (D)(1) The department shall send notice of a decision by certified mail, return receipt requested to the applicant, permittee, licensee, certificate holder, and affected persons who have requested in writing to be notified. Affected persons may request in writing to be notified by regular mail or electronic mail in lieu of certified mail. Notice of decisions for which a department decision is not required pursuant to subsection (C) must be provided by mail, delivery, or other appropriate means to the applicant, permittee, licensee, certificate holder, and affected persons who have requested in writing to be notified.

 (2) Within thirty calendar days after the mailing of a decision pursuant to item (1), an applicant, permittee, licensee, certificate holder, or affected person desiring to contest the department decision may request a contested case hearing before the Administrative Law Court, in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act. Notwithstanding Section 1‑23‑600(H)(1), the entirety of Section 1‑23‑600(H) shall apply to timely requests for a contested hearing of decisions from the Department of Environmental Services. The court shall give consideration to the provisions of Section 1‑23‑330 regarding the department's specialized knowledge.

 (E) If a deadline provided for in this section falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or state holiday, the deadline must be extended until the next calendar day that is not a Saturday, Sunday, or state holiday.

HISTORY: 2023 Act No. 60 (S.399), Section 4, eff July 1, 2024.

**SECTION 48‑6‑40.** Decisions based on compliance with applicable department regulations.

Section effective July 1, 2024.

 (A) In making a decision on a permit, license, certification, or other approval of a poultry facility or another animal facility, except a swine facility, pursuant to Section 48‑6‑30(C), the department shall base its decision solely on whether the permit complies with the applicable department regulations governing the permitting of poultry and other animal facilities, other than swine facilities.

 (B) For purposes of permitting, licensing, certification, or other approval of a poultry facility or another animal facility, other than a swine facility:

 (1) only an applicant, permittee, licensee, or affected person may request a contested case hearing pursuant to Section 48‑6‑30(D)(2);

 (2) only an applicant, permittee, licensee, or affected person may become a party to a contested case hearing; and

 (3) only an applicant, permittee, licensee, or affected person is entitled as of right to be admitted as a party pursuant to Section 1‑23‑310(5) of the Administrative Procedures Act.

 (C)(1) In determining whether to issue a permit, license, certification, or other approval of a poultry facility or another animal facility, except a swine facility, the department only may take into consideration the existing development on and use of property owned or occupied by an affected person on the date the department receives the applicant's complete application package as prescribed by regulation. The department must not take into consideration any changes to the development or use of property after receipt of the application including, but not limited to, the construction of a residence.

 (2) If a property owner signs a setback waiver of the right to contest the issuance of a permit, license, certification, or other approval of a poultry facility or another animal facility, except a swine facility, including waiver of the right to notice and a public hearing on a permit, license, certification, or other approval and to file a contested case or other action, then the affected person has seventy‑two hours to provide in writing a withdrawal or rescission of the waiver.

 (D)(1) An applicant, permittee, licensee, or affected person who is aggrieved by a decision to issue or deny a permit, license, certification, or other approval of a poultry facility or another animal facility, except a swine facility, may request a contested case hearing before the Administrative Law Court, in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act.

 (2) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a decision to issue a permit, license, certification, or other approval of a poultry facility or another animal facility, except a swine facility, may not be contested if the proposed building footprint is located eight hundred feet or more from the facility owner's property line or located one thousand feet or more from an adjacent property owner's residence.

 (E) For purposes of this section, "affected person" means a property owner with standing within a one mile radius of the proposed building footprint or permitted poultry facility or other animal facility, except a swine facility, who is challenging on his own behalf the permit, license, certificate, or other approval for the failure to comply with the specific grounds set forth in the applicable department regulations governing the permitting of poultry facilities and other animal facilities, other than swine facilities.

HISTORY: 2023 Act No. 60 (S.399), Section 4, eff July 1, 2024.

**SECTION 48‑6‑50.** Rules and regulations of department must be approved by General Assembly.

Section effective July 1, 2024.

 All rules and regulations promulgated by the department shall be null and void unless approved by a concurrent resolution of the General Assembly at the session of the General Assembly following their promulgation.

HISTORY: 2023 Act No. 60 (S.399), Section 4, eff July 1, 2024.

**SECTION 48‑6‑60.** Department may promulgate and enforce rules and regulations.

Section effective July 1, 2024.

 (A) The Department of Environmental Services may make, adopt, promulgate, and enforce reasonable rules and regulations from time to time requiring and providing for:

 (1) the classification of waters;

 (2) the control of disease‑bearing insects, including the impounding of waters;

 (3) the control of industrial plants, including the protection of workers from fumes, gases, and dust, whether obnoxious or toxic;

 (4) the use of water in air humidifiers;

 (5) the regulation of the methods of disposition of garbage or sewage and any like refuse matter in or near any village, town, or city of the State, incorporated or unincorporated, and to abate obnoxious and offensive odors caused or produced by septic tank toilets by prosecution, injunction, or otherwise; and

 (6) the alteration of safety glazing material standards and the defining of additional structural locations as hazardous areas, and for notice and hearing procedures by which to effect these changes.

 (B) The department may make separate orders and rules to meet any emergency not provided for by general rules and regulations, for the purpose of suppressing nuisances dangerous to the environment.

HISTORY: 2023 Act No. 60 (S.399), Section 4, eff July 1, 2024.

**SECTION 48‑6‑70.** Penalties for violating rules of department.

Section effective July 1, 2024.

 (A) A person who after notice violates, disobeys, or refuses, omits, or neglects to comply with a regulation of the Department of Environmental Services, made by the department pursuant to Section 48‑6‑60, is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined not more than two hundred dollars or imprisoned for thirty days.

 (B) A person who after notice violates a rule, regulation, permit, permit condition, final determination, or order of the department issued pursuant to Section 48‑6‑60 is subject to a civil penalty not to exceed one thousand dollars a day for each violation.

 (C) Fines collected pursuant to subsection (B) must be remitted by the department to the State Treasurer for deposit in the state general fund.

 (D) The term "notice" as used in this section means either actual notice or constructive notice.

 (E) This section does not apply to fines levied pursuant to Section 48‑6‑60(3) or any other areas regulated by the South Carolina Occupational Health and Safety Act, Section 41‑12‑10, et seq.

HISTORY: 2023 Act No. 60 (S.399), Section 4, eff July 1, 2024.

**SECTION 48‑6‑80.** Proceedings against a person maintaining a nuisance.

Section effective July 1, 2024.

 Nothing contained in Section 48‑6‑60 in any way abridges or limits the right of a person to maintain or prosecute a civil or criminal proceeding against a person maintaining a nuisance.

HISTORY: 2023 Act No. 60 (S.399), Section 4, eff July 1, 2024.