

AN ACT

RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT; AMENDING THE WATER QUALITY ACT;  
PROVIDING FOR WATER QUALITY STANDARDS TO BE BASED ON CREDIBLE  
SCIENTIFIC DATA.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

Section 1. Section 74-6-4 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1967,  
Chapter 190, Section 4, as amended) is amended to read:

"74-6-4. DUTIES AND POWERS OF COMMISSION. -- The  
commission:

A. may accept and supervise the administration of  
loans and grants from the federal government and from other  
sources, public or private, which loans and grants shall not  
be expended for other than the purposes for which provided;

B. shall adopt a comprehensive water quality  
management program and develop a continuing planning process;

C. shall adopt water quality standards for  
surface and ground waters of the state based on credible  
scientific data as defined by regulation by the commission  
and other evidence appropriate under the Water Quality Act.  
The standards shall include narrative standards and, as  
appropriate, the designated uses of the waters and the water  
quality criteria necessary to protect such uses. The  
standards shall at a minimum protect the public health or  
welfare, enhance the quality of water and serve the purposes

of the Water Quality Act. In making standards, the commission shall give weight it deems appropriate to all facts and circumstances, including the use and value of the water for water supplies, propagation of fish and wildlife, recreational purposes and agricultural, industrial and other purposes;

D. shall adopt, promulgate and publish regulations to prevent or abate water pollution in the state or in any specific geographic area, aquifer or watershed of the state or in any part thereof, or for any class of waters, and to govern the disposal of septage and sludge and the use of sludge for various beneficial purposes. The regulations governing the disposal of septage and sludge may include the use of tracking and permitting systems or other reasonable means necessary to assure that septage and sludge are designated for disposal in, and arrive at, disposal facilities, other than facilities on the premises where the septage and sludge is generated, for which a permit or other authorization has been issued pursuant to the federal act or the Water Quality Act. Regulations shall not specify the method to be used to prevent or abate water pollution but may specify a standard of performance for new sources that reflects the greatest reduction in the concentration of water contaminants that the commission determines to be achievable through application of the best available demonstrated

control technology, processes, operating methods or other alternatives, including where practicable a standard permitting no discharge of pollutants. In making regulations, the commission shall give weight it deems appropriate to all relevant facts and circumstances, including:

(1) character and degree of injury to or interference with health, welfare, environment and property;

(2) the public interest, including the social and economic value of the sources of water contaminants;

(3) technical practicability and economic reasonableness of reducing or eliminating water contaminants from the sources involved and previous experience with equipment and methods available to control the water contaminants involved;

(4) successive uses, including but not limited to domestic, commercial, industrial, pastoral, agricultural, wildlife and recreational uses;

(5) feasibility of a user or a subsequent user treating the water before a subsequent use;

(6) property rights and accustomed uses; and

(7) federal water quality requirements;

E. shall assign responsibility for administering its regulations to constituent agencies so as to assure

adequate coverage and prevent duplication of effort. To this end, the commission may make such classification of waters and sources of water contaminants as will facilitate the assignment of administrative responsibilities to constituent agencies. The commission shall also hear and decide disputes between constituent agencies as to jurisdiction concerning any matters within the purpose of the Water Quality Act. In assigning responsibilities to constituent agencies, the commission shall give priority to the primary interests of the constituent agencies. The department of environment shall provide technical services, including certification of permits pursuant to the federal act, and shall maintain a repository of the scientific data required by this act;

F. may enter into or authorize constituent agencies to enter into agreements with the federal government or other state governments for purposes consistent with the Water Quality Act and receive and allocate to constituent agencies funds made available to the commission;

G. may grant an individual variance from any regulation of the commission whenever it is found that compliance with the regulation will impose an unreasonable burden upon any lawful business, occupation or activity. The commission may only grant a variance conditioned upon a person effecting a particular abatement of water pollution within a reasonable period of time. Any variance shall be

granted for the period of time specified by the commission. The commission shall adopt regulations specifying the procedure under which variances may be sought, which regulations shall provide for the holding of a public hearing before any variance may be granted;

H. may adopt regulations to require the filing with it or a constituent agency of proposed plans and specifications for the construction and operation of new sewer systems, treatment works or sewerage systems or extensions, modifications of or additions to new or existing sewer systems, treatment works or sewerage systems. Filing with and approval by the federal housing administration of plans for an extension to an existing or construction of a new sewerage system intended to serve a subdivision solely residential in nature shall be deemed compliance with all provisions of this subsection;

I. may adopt regulations requiring notice to it or a constituent agency of intent to introduce or allow the introduction of water contaminants into waters of the state;

J. may adopt regulations establishing pretreatment standards that prohibit or control the introduction into publicly owned sewerage systems of water contaminants that are not susceptible to treatment by the treatment works or that would interfere with the operation of the treatment works;

K. shall not require a permit respecting the use of water in irrigated agriculture, except in the case of the employment of a specific practice in connection with such irrigation that documentation or actual case history has shown to be hazardous to public health or the environment; and

L. shall coordinate application procedures and funding cycles for loans and grants from the federal government and from other sources, public or private, with the local government division of the department of finance and administration pursuant to the New Mexico Community Assistance Act. "

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