

Act No. 196
Public Acts of 1999
Approved by the Governor
December 17, 1999
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**STATE OF MICHIGAN
90TH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 1999**

Introduced by Senators Sikkema and Peters

ENROLLED SENATE BILL No. 550

AN ACT to amend 1994 PA 451, entitled "An act to protect the environment and natural resources of the state; to codify, revise, consolidate, and classify laws relating to the environment and natural resources of the state; to regulate the discharge of certain substances into the environment; to regulate the use of certain lands, waters, and other natural resources of the state; to prescribe the powers and duties of certain state and local agencies and officials; to provide for certain charges, fees, and assessments; to provide certain appropriations; to prescribe penalties and provide remedies; to repeal certain parts of this act on a specific date; and to repeal certain acts and parts of acts," by amending section 20126 (MCL 324.20126), as amended by 1996 PA 115.

The People of the State of Michigan enact:

Sec. 20126. (1) Notwithstanding any other provision or rule of law and except as provided in subsections (2), (3), (4), and (5) and section 20128, the following persons are liable under this part:

(a) The owner or operator of a facility if the owner or operator is responsible for an activity causing a release or threat of release.

(b) The owner or operator of a facility at the time of disposal of a hazardous substance if the owner or operator is responsible for an activity causing a release or threat of release.

(c) An owner or operator of a facility who becomes an owner or operator on or after June 5, 1995, unless the owner or operator complies with both of the following:

(i) A baseline environmental assessment is conducted prior to or within 45 days after the earlier of the date of purchase, occupancy, or foreclosure. For purposes of this section, assessing property to conduct a baseline environmental assessment does not constitute occupancy.

(ii) The owner or operator discloses the results of a baseline environmental assessment to the department and subsequent purchaser or transferee if the baseline environmental assessment confirms that the property is a facility.

(d) A person who by contract, agreement, or otherwise arranged for disposal or treatment, or arranged with a transporter for transport for disposal or treatment, of a hazardous substance owned or possessed by the person, by any other person, at a facility owned or operated by another person and containing the hazardous substance. This subdivision does not include any of the following:

(i) A person who, on or after June 5, 1995, arranges for the sale or transport of a secondary material for use in producing a new product. As used in this subparagraph, secondary material means scrap metal, paper, plastic, glass, textiles, or rubber, which has demonstrated reuse or recycling potential and has been separated or removed from the solid waste stream for reuse or recycling, whether or not subsequent separation and processing is required, if substantial amounts of the material are consistently used in the manufacture of products which may otherwise be produced from a raw or virgin material.

(ii) A person who, prior to June 5, 1995, arranges for the sale or transport of a secondary material for use in producing a new product unless the state has incurred response activity costs associated with these secondary materials prior to the effective date of the 1999 amendments to this section. As used in this subparagraph, secondary material

means scrap metal, paper, plastic, glass, textiles, or rubber, which has demonstrated reuse or recycling potential and has been separated or removed from the solid waste stream for reuse or recycling, whether or not subsequent separation and processing is required, if substantial amounts of the material are consistently used in the manufacture of products which may otherwise be produced from a raw or virgin material.

(iii) A person who arranges the lawful transport or disposal of any product or container commonly used in a residential household, which is in a quantity commonly used in a residential household, and which was used in the person's residential household.

(e) A person who accepts or accepted any hazardous substance for transport to a facility selected by that person.

(f) The estate or trust of a person described in subdivisions (a) to (e).

(2) Subject to section 20107a, an owner or operator who complies with subsection (1)(c) is not liable for contamination existing at the facility at the earlier of the date of purchase, occupancy, or foreclosure, unless the person is responsible for an activity causing the contamination existing at the facility. Subsection (1)(c) does not alter a person's liability with regard to a subsequent release or threat of release at a facility if the person is responsible for an activity causing the subsequent release or threat of release.

(3) Notwithstanding subsection (1), the following persons are not liable under this part unless the person is responsible for an activity causing a release at the facility:

(a) The state or a local unit of government that acquired ownership or control of a facility involuntarily through bankruptcy, tax delinquency, abandonment, a transfer from a lender pursuant to subsection (7), or other circumstances in which the government involuntarily acquires title or control by virtue of its governmental function or as provided in this part, a local unit of government to which ownership or control of a facility is transferred by the state or by another local unit of government that is not liable under subsection (1), or the state or a local unit of government that acquired ownership or control of a facility by seizure, receivership, or forfeiture pursuant to the operation of law or by court order.

(b) A state or local unit of government that holds or acquires an easement interest in a facility, holds or acquires an interest in a facility by dedication in a plat, or by dedication pursuant to 1909 PA 283, MCL 220.1 to 239.6, or otherwise holds or acquires an interest in a facility for a transportation or utility corridor or public right of way.

(c) A person who holds an easement interest in a facility or holds a utility franchise to provide service, for the purpose of conveying or providing goods or services, including, but not limited to, utilities, sewers, roads, railways, and pipelines; or a person that acquires access through an easement.

(d) A person who owns severed subsurface mineral rights or severed subsurface formations or who leases subsurface mineral rights or formations.

(e) The state or a local unit of government that leases property to a person if the state or the local unit of government is not liable under this part for environmental contamination at the property.

(f) A person who owns or occupies residential real property if hazardous substance use at the property is consistent with residential use.

(g) A person who acquires a facility as a result of the death of the prior owner or operator of the facility, whether by inheritance, devise, or transfer from an inter vivos or testamentary trust.

(h) A person who did not know and had no reason to know that the property was a facility. To establish that the person did not know and did not have a reason to know that the property was a facility, the person shall have undertaken at the time of acquisition all appropriate inquiry into the previous ownership and uses of the property consistent with good commercial or customary practice. A determination of liability under this section shall take into account any specialized knowledge or experience on the part of the person, the relationship of the purchase price to the value of the property if uncontaminated by a hazardous substance, commonly known or reasonable ascertainable information about the property, the obviousness of the presence or likely presence of a release or threat of release at the property, and the ability to detect a release or threat of release by appropriate inspection.

(i) A utility performing normal construction, maintenance, and repair activities in the normal course of its utility service business. This subsection does not apply to property owned by the utility.

(j) A lessee who uses property for retail, office, or commercial purpose.

(4) Notwithstanding subsection (1), the following persons are not liable under this part:

(a) The owner or operator of a hazardous waste treatment, storage, or disposal facility regulated pursuant to part 111 from which there is a release or threat of release solely from the treatment, storage, or disposal facility, or a waste management unit at the facility and the release or threat of release is subject to corrective action under part 111.

(b) A lender that engages in or conducts a lawful marshalling or liquidation of personal property if the lender does not cause or contribute to the environmental contamination. This includes holding a sale of personal property on a portion of the facility.

(c) The owner or operator of property onto which contamination has migrated unless that person is responsible for an activity causing the release that is the source of the contamination.

(d) A person who owns or operates a facility in which the release or threat of release was caused solely by 1 or more of the following:

(i) An act of God.

(ii) An act of war.

(iii) An act or omission of a third party other than an employee or agent of the person or a person in a contractual relationship existing either directly or indirectly with a person who is liable under this section.

(5) Notwithstanding any other provision of this part, the state or a local unit of government or a lender who has not participated in the management of the facility is not liable under this part for costs or damages as a result of response activity taken in response to a release or threat of release. For a lender, this subsection applies only to response activity undertaken prior to foreclosure. This subsection does not preclude liability for costs or damages as a result of gross negligence, including reckless, willful, or wanton misconduct, or intentional misconduct by the state or local unit of government.

(6) In establishing liability under this section, the department bears the burden of proof. If the department proves a prima facie case against a person, the person shall bear the burden of showing by a preponderance of the evidence that he or she is not liable under this section.

(7) A lender that is not responsible for an activity causing a release at a facility and that establishes that it has met the requirements of subsection (1)(c) with respect to that facility may immediately transfer to the state the property on which there has been a release or a threat of a release if the lender complies with all of the following:

(a) Within 9 months following foreclosure and for a period of at least 120 days, the lender either lists the facility with a broker, dealer, or agent who deals with the type of property in question, or advertises the facility as being for sale or disposition on at least a monthly basis in either a real estate publication, a trade or other publication suitable for the facility in question, or a newspaper of general circulation of over 10,000 covering the area where the property is located.

(b) The lender has taken reasonable care in maintaining and preserving the real estate and permanent fixtures.

(c) The lender provides to the department all environmental information related to the facility that is available to the lender.

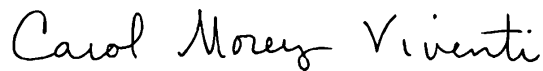
(d) If the department has issued an order pursuant to section 20119, the lender has complied with the order to the department's satisfaction.

(e) If conditions on the property pose a threat of fire or explosion or present an imminent hazard through direct contact with hazardous substances, the lender has undertaken appropriate response activities to abate the threat or hazard.

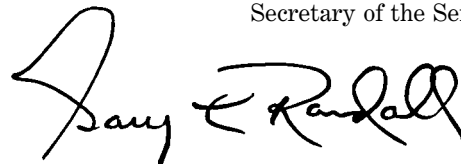
(8) The department shall establish minimum technical standards for baseline environmental assessments conducted under this section in guidelines pursuant to the administrative procedures act of 1969, 1969 PA 306, MCL 24.201 to 24.328.

(9) Notwithstanding subsection (1)(c), if the owner or operator of the facility became the owner or operator of the facility on or after June 5, 1995 and prior to March 6, 1996, and the facility contains an underground storage tank system as defined in part 213, that owner or operator is liable under this part only if the owner or operator is responsible for an activity causing a release or threat of release.

This act is ordered to take immediate effect.



Secretary of the Senate.



Clerk of the House of Representatives.

Approved _____

Governor.