

NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT (EXCERPT)

Act 451 of 1994

Part 47

SEWAGE DISPOSAL AND WATER SUPPLY DISTRICTS

324.4701 Definitions.

Sec. 4701.

As used in this part:

(a) "Due notice" means notice published at least twice, with an interval of at least 7 days between the 2 publication dates, in a newspaper or other publication of general circulation within the appropriate area or, if a publication of general circulation is not available, by posting at a reasonable number of conspicuous places within the appropriate area. Posting shall include, if possible, posting at public places where it may be customary to post notices concerning county or municipal affairs. At any hearing held pursuant to the notice and at the time and place designated in the notice, adjournment may be made without renewing the notice for an adjournment date.

(b) "Municipality" includes a metropolitan district, a water or sewer authority created by law, or a county, township, charter township, incorporated city, or incorporated village. An incorporated village, for the purposes of this part, is a governmental unit separate and distinct from the township or townships in which it is located.

(c) "Sewage disposal systems" includes all interceptor sewers, storm sewers, sanitary sewers, combined sanitary and storm sewers, sewage treatment plants, and all other plants, works, instrumentalities, and properties used or useful in connection with the collection, treatment, and disposal of sewage and industrial wastes.

(d) "United States or agencies of the United States" includes the United States of America or any bureau, department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States or otherwise created by the congress of the United States.

(e) "Water supply and sewage disposal district" means a governmental subdivision of this state and a public body corporate and politic organized in accordance with this part for the purpose, with the powers, and subject to the restrictions in this part.

(f) "Water supply system" includes all plants, work, instrumentalities, and properties used or useful in connection with obtaining a water supply, the treatment of water, and the distribution of water.

History: 1994, Act 451, Eff. Mar. 30, 1995

Popular Name: Act 451

Popular Name: NREPA

324.4702 Department of natural resources; powers and duties.

Sec. 4702.

The department under this part has all of the following powers and duties:

(a) To foster and encourage the organization of sewage disposal and water supply districts, to act as the administrative agency in the proceedings incident to the formation of districts, and to offer and lend appropriate assistance to the directors of districts organized as provided in this part in the carrying out of any of their powers, functions, and programs.

(b) To cooperate, negotiate, and enter into contracts with the other governments, governmental units and agencies in matters concerning water supply systems and sewage disposal systems; to take steps and perform acts and execute documents as may be necessary to take advantage of any act enacted by the congress of the United States that may make available funds for any of the purposes enumerated in this part or be otherwise of assistance in carrying out the purposes of this part; to disburse money that may be appropriated by the legislature for the use and benefit of the districts created under this part or municipalities or local units of government of this state in accordance with the formula prescribed in this part or in the acts of appropriation; and to disburse money that may be received by this state from the United States government for the purposes provided for in this part in accordance with the formula set forth by applicable acts of congress.

(c) To act as the fiscal agent for this state for the purpose of making available to local units of government and the districts as may be organized under this part money or instruments of indebtedness that may be approved by the legislature or the people of this state for the construction and operation of sewage disposal systems by local units of government or districts.

(d) To coordinate its duties and functions with similar or related duties and functions that are performed by other state agencies or governmental units to coordinate and cooperate efforts to accomplish the purposes of this part.

History: 1994, Act 451, Eff. Mar. 30, 1995

Popular Name: Act 451

Popular Name: NREPA

324.4703 Sewage disposal and water supply districts; joint municipal action to form district; filing, contents, and consolidation of petition.

Sec. 4703.

(1) Two or more municipalities, by resolution of their legislative bodies, may file a petition with the department requesting that a sewage disposal district or a water supply district or a combination of both be organized to function in the area described in the petition. The petition shall set forth all of the following:

(a) The proposed name of the district.

(b) That there is need in the interests of public health and welfare for the district to function in the area described in the petition.

(c) A description of the area proposed to be organized as a district. The description is not required to be given by metes and bounds or by legal subdivision, but is sufficient if the description is generally accurate and designates the local units of governments comprised within the proposed district. The territory shall include only area within the boundaries of the petitioning municipality.

(d) A request that a referendum be held within the defined territory on the question of creation of the district in the territory, and that the agency create the requested district.

(2) When more than 1 petition is filed covering a portion of the same territory, the agency may consolidate all or any of the petitions.

History: 1994, Act 451, Eff. Mar. 30, 1995

Popular Name: Act 451

Popular Name: NREPA

324.4704 Sewage disposal and water supply districts; petition; hearing; notice; adjournment; determination as to territory affected.

Sec. 4704.

Within 30 days after a petition is filed with the department, or later if authorized by the department, but not to exceed 90 days, the department shall cause due notice to be given of a hearing upon the question of the desirability and necessity in the interests of public health and welfare of the creation of the district, upon the question of appropriate boundaries to be assigned to the district, upon the propriety of the petition and of the proceedings taken under this part, and upon all other questions relative to this matter. All interested parties have the right to attend the hearings and be heard. Due notice of the time and place of holding the hearing shall be given to all of the executive officials of the municipalities included within the involved territory. If it appears upon the hearing that it is desirable to include within the proposed district territory outside of the area within which due notice has been given, or if it is made to appear that more data or information is needed, the hearing shall be publicly adjourned and due notice of further hearing shall be given throughout the entire area considered for inclusion in the district and a further hearing held. The department shall cooperate to the fullest extent possible with the local units of government included within the territorial limits of the proposed district in the making of the necessary investigations and engineering and financial studies that may be required for the proper decisions to be made by the department upon the conclusion of the hearing. After the hearing, if the department determines upon the facts presented and upon other relevant facts and information as may be available to it that there is need in the interests of public health and welfare for a sewage disposal or water supply district, or both, to be created and to function in the territory considered at the hearing, it shall make and record this determination and shall define the boundaries of the districts by the territorial limits of municipalities included within the district or by metes and bounds. In making

the determination and in defining the boundaries, the department may give due weight and consideration to the physical and topographical conditions of the area considered, availability or nonavailability of water resources, engineering and economic feasibility of the construction and management of the works required, and all other relevant and pertinent facts that may be brought to its attention or of which it may have knowledge. Such additional territory shall not be included without the approval by resolution of the legislative body of any municipality affected, including the original petitioners.

History: 1994, Act 451, Eff. Mar. 30, 1995

Popular Name: Act 451

Popular Name: NREPA

324.4705 Sewage disposal and water supply districts; hearing; determination of no necessity; record; determination of necessity; referendum; rules; creation of authority; application; petitions to include additional territory; legal status of district; certificate.

Sec. 4705.

(1) If the department determines after the hearing that there is no need for a district to be formed in the territory considered at the hearing and that the operation of the district within the defined boundaries is not practicable and feasible from the standpoint of engineering, administration, and financing, the department shall make and record the determination and shall deny any petition filed with it.

(2) If the department has made and recorded a determination that in the interests of public health and welfare there is a need for the formation, organization, and functioning of a district in a particular territory and has defined the boundaries of the district, it shall consider the question of whether the operation of that district within the boundaries with the powers conferred upon districts in this part is desired by a majority of the electors within the boundaries of the district. To assist the department in the determination of this question, it is the duty of the department, within a reasonable time of entry of the finding that there is need for the organization of the proposed district and the determination of the boundaries of the district, to order a referendum within the proposed district upon the proposition of the creation of the district and to order the municipalities affected to cause due notice of the referendum to be given. The department shall direct the officials in charge of the holding of elections in the local units of government included within the district to call a special election or to place the referendum on the ballot at the next general election to be held in all of the territory comprising the district. The question shall be submitted by ballots prepared by the department that shall succinctly describe the district proposed to be formed, the area in which it shall function, and in appropriate language require those voting on the proposition to vote for or against the creation of the district, in accordance with the requirements of law for the holding of referendums on state questions. Municipalities affected are responsible for the costs of the preparation of the ballots. Only electors who have property assessed for taxes within the boundaries of the district are eligible to vote in the referendum. Upon the completion of the referendum, the department shall publish the result of the referendum.

(3) The department shall pay all expenses for the issuance of the notice and the conduct of the hearings described in this section and shall supervise the conduct of the hearings. The referendum shall be held by the regular established election officials and any costs shall be borne by the affected municipalities. The department shall promulgate rules governing the conduct of the hearings.

(4) If the results of the referendum described in subsection (3) call for the formation of the proposed district, the department shall call a conference of all the officials of all of the municipalities within the boundaries of the proposed district and the department shall make every effort to encourage the municipalities to incorporate an authority for the purpose of constructing and operating a sewage disposal system or water supply system under the terms and authority vested in the municipalities pursuant to law. If after the expiration of 180 days from the holding of the conference or within an additional period as the department may consider necessary, the municipalities have not created an authority as provided in this part, the department shall make, file, and publish as provided in this part a determination creating the district as contained in the application and as approved by the referendum.

(5) Upon the making and filing of the determination as described in subsection (4), due notice shall be served and published and the department shall appoint 5 directors who, for the purpose of this part, are electors within the territory comprising the district and who shall comprise a temporary governing body of the district. The members of the temporary governing body shall hold office until the officers of the first permanent governing body have been elected and qualified.

(6) The district shall be a governmental subdivision of this state and a public body corporate when the appointed directors present to the secretary of state an application signed by them that sets forth all of the following:

(a) That a petition for the creation of the district was filed with the department pursuant to this part, that the

proceedings specified in this part were taken, that the application is being filed in order to complete the organization of the district as a governmental subdivision and a public body corporate under this part, and that the applicants are the temporary directors of the district.

(b) The name and official residence of each of the directors together with a certification of their appointment.

(c) The name which is proposed for the district.

(d) The location of the present office that has been selected for the district by the directors.

(7) The application shall be subscribed and sworn to by at least a majority of the directors before an officer authorized by the laws of the state to administer oaths. The officer shall certify upon the application that he or she personally knows the directors and that each has subscribed thereto in the officer's presence. The application shall be accompanied by a certified statement made by the department that a petition was filed, notice issued, and hearing held as required in this part; that the department determined that there is need in the interests of the public health and welfare for a district to function in the proposed territory; that the boundaries are defined; that notice was given and referendum held in the question of creation of the district; that the result of the referendum showed a majority of the votes cast in the referendum to be in favor of the creation of such a district; and that the department did determine that the operation of the proposed district is administratively practicable and feasible. In addition, the statement shall set forth the boundaries of the district.

(8) The secretary of state shall examine the application and statement and, if he or she finds that the name proposed for the district is not identical with any similar district of this state or so nearly identical as to lead to confusion or uncertainty, the secretary of state shall receive and file the application and statement and shall record them in an appropriate book of record in the office of the secretary of state. When the application and statement have been made, filed, and recorded as provided in this section, the district shall constitute a governmental subdivision of this state and a public body corporate. The secretary of state shall make and issue to the directors a certificate under the seal of the state of the due organization of the district and shall record such certificate with the application and statement.

(9) Petitions for including additional territory within a district may be filed with the department and the proceedings provided for in this part or petitions to organize a district shall be observed in the case of petitions for inclusion. The department shall prescribe the form for the petitions, which shall be as nearly as possible to the form prescribed in this part for petitions to organize a district. The petition shall be filed with the department and upon its receipt it shall be referred to the governing body of the district to be affected by the petition and if, after due consideration, the governing body determines against the inclusion of the additional territory, the petition shall be denied.

(10) In any suit, action, or proceeding involving the validity or enforcement of or relating to any contract, proceeding, or action of the district, the district shall be considered to be legally established in accordance with this part upon proof of the issuance of the certificate by the secretary of state. The certificate of the secretary of state shall be admissible in evidence in any suit, action, or proceeding described in this subsection and shall be proof of the filing and contents of the certificate.

History: 1994, Act 451, Eff. Mar. 30, 1995

Popular Name: Act 451

Popular Name: NREPA

324.4706 Permanent governing body; nomination, election, and terms of directors; certification of election; vacancy; conducting business at public meeting; notice of meeting; quorum; concurrence of majority for determination; expenses.

Sec. 4706.

(1) The first permanent governing body of the district after the district has been organized and has received the secretary of state certificate described in section 4705 shall consist of 5 directors. The directors shall be nominated and elected at the next general state election in the same manner and pursuant to the election laws applicable to members of the house of representatives.

(2) Except for the first directors, the directors shall hold office for a term of 6 years. Among the first directors to be elected, the 2 receiving the highest number of votes shall hold office for the full term of 6 years and the 3 receiving the next highest number of votes shall hold office for 4 years. The secretary of state shall be responsible for the certification of the election of the directors. A vacancy shall be filled by appointment made by the remaining directors for the unexpired term.

(3) The business which the directors may perform shall be conducted at a public meeting of the directors held in compliance with the open meetings act, Act No. 267 of the Public Acts of 1976, being sections 15.261 to 15.275 of

the Michigan Compiled Laws. Public notice of the time, date, and place of the meeting shall be given in the manner required by Act No. 267 of the Public Acts of 1976. A majority of the directors constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business and the concurrence of a majority of the total number of directors in a matter shall be required for the matter's determination. A director shall not receive compensation for services, but shall be reimbursed for expenses necessarily incurred in the discharge of his or her duties.

History: 1994, Act 451, Eff. Mar. 30, 1995

Popular Name: Act 451

Popular Name: NREPA

324.4707 Employment of executive secretary, technical experts, officers, agents, and employees; qualifications, duties, and compensation; delegation of powers and duties; furnishing copies of documents and other information; availability of writings to public; execution of surety bonds; records; annual audit; designation of representatives to advise and consult on questions of program and policy.

Sec. 4707.

(1) The directors may employ an executive secretary, technical experts, and other officers, agents, and employees, permanent or temporary, as required, and shall determine their qualifications, duties, and compensation. The directors may delegate to the chairperson, to 1 or more directors, or to 1 or more agents or employees, powers and duties as they consider proper.

(2) The directors shall furnish to the department upon request copies of all rules, orders, contracts, forms, minutes, proceedings, and other documents that they adopt or employ and other information concerning their activities as required by the department in the performance of the department's duties under this part. A writing prepared, owned, used, in the possession of, or retained by the directors in the performance of an official function shall be made available to the public in compliance with the freedom of information act, Act No. 442 of the Public Acts of 1976, being sections 15.231 to 15.246 of the Michigan Compiled Laws.

(3) The directors shall provide for the execution of surety bonds for employees and officers entrusted with funds or property; shall provide for the keeping of a full and accurate record of their proceedings and of rules and orders promulgated or adopted; and shall provide for an annual audit of the accounts of receipts and disbursements. The directors shall request that the legislative body and executive officers of a municipality located within the territory comprised within the district designate a representative to advise and consult with the directors of the district on questions of program and policy that may affect the property, water supply, or sewage disposal problems, or other interests of the municipality.

History: 1994, Act 451, Eff. Mar. 30, 1995

Popular Name: Act 451

Popular Name: NREPA

324.4708 Sewage disposal and water supply districts; powers.

Sec. 4708.

A district organized under this part constitutes a governmental subdivision of this state and a body corporate, exercising public powers, with power to sue and to be sued in any court of this state. A district shall possess all the powers necessary to organize itself and also shall possess powers incident to the powers enumerated in this part. The district is authorized and empowered to do all of the following:

(a) Pursuant to the terms of any contract entered into under section 4709 of this part, to construct and operate sewage disposal systems and water supply systems within the area comprising its territorial limits and to acquire, extend, and improve the systems.

(b) To make and cause to be made surveys, studies, and investigations of water resources of the area within its territorial limits for the purpose of determining the feasibility and practicability of developing new sources of water supply to municipalities, industrial and commercial establishments, and agricultural and residential lands and areas so that water is available to agricultural and residential lands in a quantity and quality necessary for the protection

of the public health and the promotion of the general welfare within the areas.

(c) To make and cause to be made surveys, studies, and investigations for the purpose of ascertaining the requirements of municipalities, industrial and commercial establishments, individual and collective groups, or occupants of lands for sewage disposal systems so that sewers and sewage disposal facilities are available to the entities described in this subdivision that are situated within the territorial limits of the district and that may need or require the facilities for the protection of public health and the promotion of the general welfare.

(d) To cooperate with and enter into agreements with any person as may be necessary for the full performance of its functions and duties and to acquire by purchase, exchange, lease, gift, grant, bequest, devise, or otherwise, any property, real or personal, or rights or interests in property, either within or outside of its territorial limits; to maintain, administer, and improve any acquired properties; to receive income from same and to expend the income in implementing this part and its purposes; and to sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of any of its property or interests in property to implement this part and its purposes. The district is invested with the power of eminent domain in acquiring private property for public use. For the purposes of exercising the power, the district may proceed under Act No. 149 of the Public Acts of 1911, being sections 213.21 to 213.25 of the Michigan Compiled Laws, or any other statute that grants to any municipality or public body the authority to acquire private property for public use.

(e) To accept and receive money as may be appropriated to the district by the legislature of this state.

(f) To accept and receive any funds or money which may be appropriated by any act of congress either directly from any federal governmental agency responsible for the disbursement and allocation of the funds or through the department and for that purpose the districts are authorized to execute contracts, documents, or agreements as may be required by the congressional act as a prerequisite to the securing of the funds.

History: 1994, Act 451, Eff. Mar. 30, 1995

Popular Name: Act 451

Popular Name: NREPA

324.4709 Sewage disposal and water supply districts; contracts with municipalities; construction, improvement, enlargement, extension, operation, and financing; pledge of payment; resolution; approval by electors; issuance of bonds.

Sec. 4709.

(1) The district may enter into contracts with any municipality located within its territorial limits providing for the acquisition, construction, improvement, enlargement, extension, operation, and financing of a sewage disposal system or water supply system. A contract shall provide for the allocation and payment of the share of the total cost to be borne by the municipality in annual installments for a period not exceeding 40 years. Each contracting municipality may pledge its full faith and credit for the payment of the obligation in the manner and times specified in the contract. The district shall make a reasonable charge for its services that it renders to the users in order to cover the retirement of outstanding indebtedness, costs of operation, maintenance, and replacement of its plants and reserves for capital improvements. If there is excess money in the treasury of the district after all of the contingencies have been met, the excess shall be rebated to the contracting municipalities in proportion to the total amount that the municipality paid for services it has received from the district. No limitation in any statute or charter shall prevent the levy and collection by each of the contracting municipalities of the full amount of taxes necessary for the payment of the contractual obligation. These funds may be raised by each contracting municipality by the use of 1 or more of the following methods:

(a) The levy of special assessments on property benefited by the sewage disposal system or water supply system. The procedures relative to the levying and collection of the special assessments shall conform as near as may be to applicable charter or statutory provisions.

(b) The levy and collection of rates or charges to users and beneficiaries of the service or services furnished by the sewage disposal system or water supply system.

(c) From money received, or to be received, derived from the imposition of taxes by this state, unless the money for this purpose is expressly prohibited by the state constitution of 1963.

(d) From any other fund or funds that may be validly used for the purpose. The contract may provide for any and all matters relating to the acquisition, construction, operation, and financing of the sewage disposal system or water supply system as are considered necessary, including authorization to the district to issue bonds secured by the full faith and credit pledges of the contracting municipalities, as authorized in this part. The contract may provide for appropriate remedies in case of default, including, but not limited to, the right of the municipalities to authorize the county treasurer or other official charged with the disbursement of funds derived from the state sales tax levy under the general sales tax act, 1933 PA 167, MCL 205.51 to 205.78, to withhold sufficient funds to make up any default

or deficiency in funds.

(2) A municipality desiring to enter into a contract with the district under this section shall authorize, by resolution of its governing body, the execution of the contract. The resolution shall be published in 1 or more newspapers of general circulation within the municipality, and the contract may be executed without a vote of the electors upon the expiration of 30 days after the date of the publication unless, within the 30-day period, a petition signed by not less than 10% of the registered electors residing within the limits of the municipality is filed with the clerk of the municipality requesting a referendum upon the execution of the contract. If this occurs, the contract shall not be executed until approval by the vote of a majority of the electors of the municipality qualified to vote and voting at a general or special election to be held not more than 90 days after the filing of the petition. A special election called for this purpose shall not be included in any statutory or charter limitation as to the number of special elections to be called within any period of time. Signatures on any petition shall be verified by some person under oath, as the actual signatures of the persons whose names are signed on the petition, and the clerk of the municipality has the same power to reject signatures as city clerks under section 25 of the home rule city act, 1909 PA 279, MCL 117.25. The number of registered electors in a municipality is determined by the registration books as of the date of the filing of the petition.

(3) To obtain funds to acquire, construct, improve, enlarge, or extend the sewage disposal system or water supply system authorized by this part, the district, after the execution of the contract or contracts authorized by this part, upon ordinance or resolution adopted by the district, may issue its negotiable bonds secured by the full faith and credit pledges made by each contracting municipality pursuant to authorization contained in this part and the contracts entered into pursuant to this part. Except as otherwise provided in this part, bonds are subject to the revised municipal finance act, 2001 PA 34, MCL 141.2101 to 141.2821. The ordinance or resolution authorizing the issuance of the bonds shall include the terms of the contracts.

History: 1994, Act 451, Eff. Mar. 30, 1995 ;-- Am. 2002, Act 214, Imd. Eff. Apr. 29, 2002

Popular Name: Act 451

Popular Name: NREPA

324.4710 Sewage disposal and water supply districts; contract sewage treatment; income; application.

Sec. 4710.

The district may enter into a contract for the furnishing of sewage treatment services by any sewage treatment plant owned or operated by the district as a part of its sewage disposal system or the furnishing of water service from any water facilities owned or operated by the district. This contract shall provide for reasonable charges or rates for the service furnished. Any income derived from a contract described in this section shall be applied by the district to the costs of operation and maintenance of its sewage disposal system or its water supply system, and any balances remaining after payment of its cost shall be applied in reduction of its outstanding bonded indebtedness incurred for the acquisition or improvement of its sewage disposal system or water supply system. A contract shall not exceed a period of 40 years.

History: 1994, Act 451, Eff. Mar. 30, 1995

Popular Name: Act 451

Popular Name: NREPA

324.4711 Detachment of territory from participating municipality; contractual obligations; bonds; redemption.

Sec. 4711.

If territory that is part of a district created under this part is detached from a municipality and transferred to a municipality that is not part of the district, the territory shall remain a part of the municipality from which detached only for the purpose of carrying out any contractual obligations or for the purpose of levying a tax to retire any bonded indebtedness incurred by such district for which the territory is liable until the contractual obligations are fulfilled or the bonds are redeemed or sufficient funds are available in the district's debt retirement fund for this

purpose. A territory described in this section is a part of the municipality to which transferred for all other purposes and subsequent to the redemption of the bonds or the time when sufficient funds are available to redeem the bonds, the territory is no longer a part of the district.

History: 1994, Act 451, Eff. Mar. 30, 1995

Popular Name: Act 451

Popular Name: NREPA

324.4712 Existing systems; self-liquidating revenue bonds.

Sec. 4712.

If the governing body of a district formed under this part acquires, extends, improves, or operates a sewage disposal system or water supply system or provides for the sale and purchase of sewage disposal service or water supply service from an existing system or systems and executes contracts that may be necessary, the authority may, pursuant to any contract entered into under section 4709, issue self-liquidating revenue bonds in accordance with the revenue bond act of 1933, Act No. 94 of the Public Acts of 1933, being sections 141.101 to 141.140 of the Michigan Compiled Laws, or any other act providing for the issuance of revenue bonds. However, these bonds are payable solely from the revenues of the sewage disposal system or the water supply system. The charges specified in any contract are subject to increase by the district at any time if necessary to provide funds to meet its obligations and any contract authorized by this part is for a period of not more than 40 years. The legislative body of any municipality that enters into a contract with the district may raise by taxes or pay from its general funds any money required to be paid under the terms of the contract to obtain maps, plans, designs, specifications, and cost estimates of the proposed sewage disposal system or water supply system.

History: 1994, Act 451, Eff. Mar. 30, 1995

Popular Name: Act 451

Popular Name: NREPA