

HOUSE BILL 250

M3

(PRE-FILED)

6lr0068

CF SB 108

By: **Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee (By Request – Departmental – Environment)**

Requested: September 25, 2025

Introduced and read first time: January 14, 2026

Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Environment – Water Resources and Wetlands – Enforcement**

3 FOR the purpose of authorizing the Department of the Environment to impose an
4 administrative penalty for certain violations related to the appropriation or use of
5 water and dam safety; repealing a certain limitation on the Department's authority
6 to issue certain orders and send certain notices related to dam safety; authorizing
7 the Department to impose an administrative penalty for certain violations related to
8 wetlands construction, modification, or development; requiring certain
9 administrative penalties to be paid into the Maryland Clean Water Fund; and
10 generally relating to the enforcement authority of the Department of the
11 Environment.

12 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

13 Article – Environment

14 Section 5–514 through 5–516

15 Annotated Code of Maryland

16 (2013 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

17 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

18 Article – Environment

19 Section 9–320(a) and (c)

20 Annotated Code of Maryland

21 (2014 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

22 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

23 Article – Environment

24 Section 9–320(b) and 16–502

25 Annotated Code of Maryland

26 (2014 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



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

3 **Article – Environment**

4 5–514.

5 (a) (1) In addition to being subject to an injunctive action under this subtitle,
6 a person who violates any provision of this subtitle or any regulation, order, or permit
7 adopted or issued under this subtitle is liable for a civil penalty not exceeding \$10,000 per
8 violation to be collected in a civil action brought by the Department.

9 (2) Each day a violation occurs or continues is a separate violation under
10 this subsection.

11 (3) (i) Before bringing a civil action against a local government under
12 this subsection, the Department shall meet and consult with the local government to seek
13 an alternative resolution to the contested issue.

14 (ii) Prior consultation by the Department with the local government
15 shall constitute compliance with this subsection.

16 (b) A person who violates a provision of this subtitle or a regulation adopted under
17 this subtitle is subject to the penalties provided in § 9–343 of this article.

18 (C) (1) **IN ADDITION TO ANY OTHER REMEDIES AVAILABLE AT LAW OR IN
19 EQUITY AND AFTER AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A HEARING, WHICH MAY BE WAIVED IN
20 WRITING BY THE PERSON ACCUSED OF A VIOLATION, THE DEPARTMENT MAY
21 IMPOSE A PENALTY FOR VIOLATION OF ANY PROVISION OF THIS SUBTITLE OR ANY
22 REGULATION, ORDER, OR PERMIT ADOPTED OR ISSUED UNDER THIS SUBTITLE.**

23 (2) **THE PENALTY IMPOSED ON A PERSON UNDER THIS SUBSECTION
24 SHALL BE:**

25 (I) **UP TO \$5,000 FOR EACH VIOLATION, BUT NOT EXCEEDING
26 \$100,000 TOTAL; AND**

27 (II) **ASSESSED WITH CONSIDERATION GIVEN TO:**

28 1. **THE WILLFULNESS OF THE VIOLATION, THE EXTENT
29 TO WHICH THE EXISTENCE OF THE VIOLATION WAS KNOWN TO BUT UNCORRECTED
30 BY THE VIOLATOR, AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE VIOLATOR EXERCISED
31 REASONABLE CARE;**

28 (I) REAL PROPERTY OF THE PERSON WHEN RECORDED WITH
29 THE CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE COUNTY IN WHICH THE PROPERTY IS
30 LOCATED; AND

1 **[(c)] (D)** (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, all funds
2 collected by the Department under this section, including any civil **[penalty]** OR
3 **ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTIES** or any fine imposed by a court under the provisions of this
4 section, shall be paid into the Maryland Clean Water Fund.

5 (2) Funds collected by the Department under this section relating to an
6 unsafe condition shall be paid into the Private Dam Repair Fund.

7 5-515.

8 (a) After or concurrently with the service of a complaint under this subtitle
9 **[relating to water appropriation and use]**, the Department may:

10 (1) Issue an order that requires the person to whom the order is directed to
11 take corrective action within a time set in the order;

12 (2) Send a written notice that requires the person to whom the notice is
13 directed to file a written report about the alleged violation; or

14 (3) Send a written notice that requires the person to whom the notice is
15 directed:

16 (i) To appear at a hearing before the Department at a time and place
17 the Department sets to answer the charges in the complaint; or

18 (ii) To file a written report and also to appear at a hearing before the
19 Department at a time and place the Department sets to answer the charges in the
20 complaint.

21 (b) Any order issued under this section is effective immediately, according to its
22 terms, when it is served.

23 5-516.

24 (a) The Department shall give notice and hold any hearing related to orders
25 imposed under **[the water appropriation and use provisions of]** this subtitle in accordance
26 with the Administrative Procedure Act.

27 (b) (1) Within 10 days after being served with an order under § 5-515(a)(1) of
28 this subtitle, the person served may request in writing a hearing before the Department.

29 (2) (i) Subject to subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, if a request for a
30 hearing on an order is made under this subsection, the Department shall:

31 1. Hold the hearing promptly after receiving the request; and

2. Render a decision promptly after the hearing.

2 (ii) If a request for a hearing on an order is made under this
3 subsection and the Department alleges in the order that there is an imminent threat or
4 danger to the public health or safety or to the environment, the Department shall:

2. Render a decision within 10 days after the hearing.

8 (c) Within 10 days after being served with a notice under § 5-515(a)(2) of this
9 subtitle, the person served may request in writing a hearing before the Department.

10 (d) The Department may make a verbatim record of the proceedings of any
11 hearing held under this subtitle.

12 (e) (1) In connection with any hearing under this subtitle, the Department
13 may:

(i) Subpoena any person or evidence; and

(ii) Order a witness to give evidence.

16 (2) A subpoenaed witness shall receive the same fees and mileage
17 reimbursement as if the hearing were part of a civil action.

(i) Compel obedience to the Department's order or subpoena; or

(ii) Compel testimony or the production of evidence.

22 (4) The court may punish as contempt any failure to obey its order issued
23 under this section.

24 9-320.

(a) There is a Maryland Clean Water Fund.

(1) All application fees, permit fees, renewal fees, and funds collected by the Department under this subtitle, including any civil or administrative penalty or any fine imposed by a court under the provisions of this subtitle;

(4) Any fees or funds that the Department collects under Subtitle 2, Part III of this title and §§ 9–269 and 9–270 of this title and any civil or administrative penalty or fine imposed by a court under the provisions of Subtitle 2 of this title;

10 (5) Any fees or funds that the Department collects under Subtitle 24 of this
11 title and any civil or administrative penalty or fine imposed by a court under the provisions
12 of Subtitle 24 of this title; and

13 (6) Any other fees legally authorized to be paid into the Maryland Clean
14 Water Fund.

15 (c) The Department shall use the Maryland Clean Water Fund for activities that
16 are related to:

23 (3) Correcting to the extent possible the failure to implement or maintain
24 erosion and sediment controls;

25 (4) Administration of the sediment control program;

26 (5) Emergency removal of sewage sludge or mitigation of the effect of any
27 utilization of sewage sludge that the Department finds:

28 (i) Endangers public health, safety, or welfare; or

29 (ii) Endangers or damages natural resources;

30 (6) Activities that are:

3 (iii) Conducted by the Department under Subtitle 24 of this title; and

(7) Providing supplemental inspections and monitoring of sewage sludge utilization sites by:

(ii) Limiting the value of services provided under the contract to no more than 45% of the generator fees for sludge utilized in that county that is generated outside of that county or service area.

11 16-502.

15 (2) In imposing a penalty under this subsection, the court may consider the
16 factors in § 9-342(b)(2)(ii) of this article and any other relevant factors.

19 (b) The circuit court may issue an injunction requiring the person to cease the
20 violation and restore the area unlawfully dredged or filled.

21 (c) Before taking any civil action to recover a penalty under subsection (a) of this
22 section, the Department shall provide the person alleged to have violated this title with
23 written notice of the proposed penalty and an opportunity for an informal meeting
24 concerning settlement of the proposed civil action.

25 (D) (1) IN ADDITION TO ANY OTHER REMEDIES AVAILABLE AT LAW OR IN
26 EQUITY AND AFTER AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A HEARING, WHICH MAY BE WAIVED IN
27 WRITING BY THE PERSON ACCUSED OF A VIOLATION, THE DEPARTMENT MAY
28 IMPOSE A PENALTY FOR VIOLATION OF ANY PROVISION OF THIS TITLE OR ANY
29 REGULATION, ORDER, OR PERMIT ADOPTED OR ISSUED UNDER THIS TITLE.

3 (II) ASSESSED WITH CONSIDERATION GIVEN TO:

5 (I) REAL PROPERTY OF THE PERSON WHEN RECORDED WITH
6 THE CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE COUNTY IN WHICH THE PROPERTY IS
7 LOCATED; AND

10 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
11 1, 2026.