

SUPPORT HB644

Short Title: Pipeline construction projects; water quality violations, cumulative effect, civil penalties

Patron: Delegate Chris L. Hurst

Reasons to Support HB644:

This bill would create a stronger punitive structure for permittees that have repeated and continuing violations, and impose appropriate revocation if compliance with permitting terms cannot be achieved.

- Ensures that natural gas pipeline construction projects are completed with a minimal amount of violations, limiting the environmental damage that the projects will cause.
- The groups that are constructing natural gas pipelines can lose their certification for a project, holding the company constructing the pipeline responsible for water quality violations.

Overview:

On any large natural gas pipeline project, the State Water Control Board can adopt regulations to penalize repeat offenders of water quality standards. The penalty on repeat infractions to water quality standards will hold pipeline construction projects responsible to reduce their impact on water quality. The bill mandates an accrued cumulative impact violation order, that includes a civil penalty of \$32,500, if there are ten water quality violations in one calendar month. Also, if there are twenty water quality violations in one month, the certification under § 401 of the federal Clean Water Act can be revoked for the pipeline project. The goal of the bill is to set in place penalties for breaking water quality standards, thus limiting the number of water quality standard violations.



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