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SENATE BILL NO. 329

Offered January 21, 1998

A BILL to amend and reenact § 10.1-1408.1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to disposal of vegetative waste.

Patron—Newman

Referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 10.1-1408.1 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 10.1-1408.1. Permit required; open dumps prohibited.

A. No person shall operate any sanitary landfill or other facility for the disposal, treatment or storage of nonhazardous solid waste without a permit from the Director.

B. No application for a new solid waste management facility permit shall be complete unless it contains the following:

1. Certification from the governing body of the county, city or town in which the facility is to be located that the location and operation of the facility are consistent with all applicable ordinances. The governing body shall inform the applicant and the Department of the facility's compliance or noncompliance not more than 120 days from receipt of a request from the applicant. No such certification shall be required for the application for the renewal of a permit or transfer of a permit as authorized by regulations of the Board;

2. A disclosure statement, except that the Director, upon request and in his sole discretion and when in his judgment other information is sufficient and available, may waive the requirement for a disclosure statement for a captive industrial landfill when such a statement would not serve the purposes of this chapter;

3. If the applicant proposes to locate the facility on property not governed by any county, city or town zoning ordinance, certification from the governing body that it has held a public hearing, in accordance with the applicable provisions of § 15.1-431, to receive public comment on the proposed facility. Such certification shall be provided to the applicant and the Department within 120 days from receipt of a request from the applicant;

4. If the applicant proposes to operate a new sanitary landfill or transfer station, a statement including a description of the steps taken by the applicant to seek the comments of the residents of the area where the sanitary landfill or transfer station is proposed to be located regarding the siting and operation of the proposed sanitary landfill or transfer station. The public comment steps shall be taken prior to filing with the Department the notice of intent to apply for a permit for the sanitary landfill or transfer station as required by the Department's solid waste management regulations. The public comment steps shall include publication of a public notice once a week for two consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation serving the locality where the sanitary landfill or transfer station is proposed to be located and holding at least one public meeting within the locality to identify issues of concern, to facilitate communication and to establish a dialogue between the applicant and persons who may be affected by the issuance of a permit for the sanitary landfill or transfer station. The public notice shall include a statement of the applicant's intent to apply for a permit to operate the proposed sanitary landfill or transfer station, the proposed sanitary landfill or transfer station site location, the date, time and location of the public meeting the applicant will hold and the name, address and telephone number of a person employed by the applicant who can be contacted by interested persons to answer questions or receive comments on the siting and operation of the proposed sanitary landfill or transfer station. The first publication of the public notice shall be at least fourteen days prior to the public meeting date.

The provisions of this subdivision shall not apply to applicants for a permit to operate a new captive industrial landfill or a new construction-demolition-debris landfill;

5. If the applicant is a local government or public authority that proposes to operate a new municipal sanitary landfill or transfer station, a statement including a description of the steps taken by the applicant to seek the comments of the residents of the area where the sanitary landfill or transfer station is proposed to be located regarding the siting and operation of the proposed sanitary landfill or transfer station. The public comment steps shall be taken prior to filing with the Department the notice of intent to apply for a permit for the sanitary landfill or transfer station as required by the Department's solid waste management regulations. The public comment steps shall include the formation of a citizens advisory group to assist the locality or public authority with the selection of a proposed site for the sanitary landfill or transfer station, publication of a public notice once a week for two consecutive weeks

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60 in a newspaper of general circulation serving the locality where the sanitary landfill or transfer station is
61 proposed to be located and holding at least one public meeting within the locality to identify issues of
62 concern, to facilitate communication and to establish a dialogue between the applicant and persons who
63 may be affected by the issuance of a permit for the sanitary landfill or transfer station. The public notice
64 shall include a statement of the applicant's intent to apply for a permit to operate the proposed sanitary
65 landfill or transfer station, the proposed sanitary landfill or transfer station site location, the date, time
66 and location of the public meeting the applicant will hold and the name, address and telephone number
67 of a person employed by the applicant who can be contacted by interested persons to answer questions
68 or receive comments on the siting and operation of the proposed sanitary landfill or transfer station. The
69 first publication of the public notice shall be at least fourteen days prior to public meeting date. For
70 local governments that have zoning ordinances, such public comment steps as required under
71 §§ 15.1-431 and 15.1-493 shall satisfy the public comment requirements for public hearings and public
72 notice as required under this section. Any applicant which is a local government or public authority that
73 proposes to operate a new transfer station on land where a municipal sanitary landfill is already located
74 shall be exempt from the public comment requirements for public hearing and public notice otherwise
75 required under this section.

76 C. Notwithstanding any other provision of law:

77 1. Every holder of a permit issued under this article who has not earlier filed a disclosure statement
78 shall, prior to July 1, 1991, file a disclosure statement with the Director.

79 2. Every applicant for a permit under this article shall file a disclosure statement with the Director
80 together with the permit application or prior to September 1, 1990, whichever comes later. No permit
81 application shall be deemed incomplete for lack of a disclosure statement prior to September 1, 1990.

82 3. Every applicant shall update its disclosure statement quarterly to indicate any change of condition
83 that renders any portion of the disclosure statement materially incomplete or inaccurate.

84 4. The Director, upon request and in his sole discretion, and when in his judgment other information
85 is sufficient and available, may waive the requirements of this subsection for a captive industrial waste
86 landfill when such requirements would not serve the purposes of this chapter.

87 D. No permit for a new solid waste management facility shall be issued until the Director has
88 determined, after investigation and evaluation of comments by the local government, that the proposed
89 facility poses no substantial present or potential danger to human health or the environment. The
90 Department shall hold a public hearing within the said county, city or town prior to the issuance of any
91 such permit for the management of nonhazardous solid waste.

92 E. The permit shall contain such conditions or requirements as are necessary to comply with the
93 requirements of this Code and the regulations of the Board and to prevent a substantial present or
94 potential hazard to human health and the environment.

95 The Director may include in any permit such recordkeeping, testing and reporting requirements as are
96 necessary to ensure that the local governing body of the county, city or town where the waste
97 management facility is located is kept timely informed regarding the general nature and quantity of
98 waste being disposed of at the facility. Such recordkeeping, testing and reporting requirements shall
99 require disclosure of proprietary information only as is necessary to carry out the purposes of this
100 chapter. At least once every ten years, the Director shall review and issue written findings on the
101 environmental compliance history of each permittee, material changes, if any, in key personnel, and
102 technical limitations, standards, or regulations on which the original permit was based. The time period
103 for review of each category of permits shall be established by Board regulation. If, upon such review,
104 the Director finds that repeated material or substantial violations of the permittee or material changes in
105 the permittee's key personnel would make continued operation of the facility not in the best interests of
106 human health or the environment, the Director shall amend or revoke the permit, in accordance
107 herewith. Whenever such review is undertaken, the Director may amend the permit to include additional
108 limitations, standards, or conditions when the technical limitations, standards, or regulations on which
109 the original permit was based have been changed by statute or amended by regulation or when any of
110 the conditions in subsection B of § 10.1-1409 exist. The Director may deny, revoke, or suspend any
111 permit for any of the grounds listed under subsection A of § 10.1-1409.

112 F. There shall exist no right to operate a landfill or other facility for the disposal, treatment or
113 storage of nonhazardous solid waste or hazardous waste within the Commonwealth. Permits for solid
114 waste management facilities shall not be transferable except as authorized in regulations promulgated by
115 the Board. The issuance of a permit shall not convey or establish any property rights or any exclusive
116 privilege, nor shall it authorize any injury to private property or any invasion of personal rights or any
117 infringement of federal, state, or local law or regulation.

118 G. No person shall dispose of solid waste in open dumps.

119 H. No person shall own, operate or allow to be operated on his property an open dump.

120 I. No person shall allow waste to be disposed of on his property without a permit. Any person who
121 removes trees, brush, or other vegetation from land used for agricultural or forestal purposes shall not be

122 required to obtain a permit if such material is deposited or placed on the same or other property of the
 123 same landowner from which such materials were cleared. *In any county with a population between*
 124 *45,500 and 45,700, any person who disposes of vegetative waste on land that is used for agricultural or*
 125 *forestal purposes shall not be required to obtain a permit if he obtains written permission from the*
 126 *landowner and the disposal of such waste is noted in the land records of the locality in which the land*
 127 *lies. No structure shall be built on such a disposal site in such county so long as the notation remains*
 128 *in the land records. The notation may be removed upon written certification by a person with*
 129 *qualifications acceptable to such county that the vegetative waste has decomposed sufficiently that the*
 130 *site may safely support construction.* The Board shall by regulation provide for other reasonable
 131 exemptions from permitting requirements for the disposal of trees, brush and other vegetation when such
 132 materials are removed for agricultural or forestal purposes.

133 When promulgating any regulation pursuant to this section, the Board shall consider the character of
 134 the land affected, the density of population, the volume of waste to be disposed, as well as other
 135 relevant factors.

136 J. No permit shall be required pursuant to this section for recycling or for temporary storage
 137 incidental to recycling. As used in this subsection "recycling" means any process whereby material
 138 which would otherwise be solid waste is used or reused, or prepared for use or reuse, as an ingredient in
 139 an industrial process to make a product, or as an effective substitute for a commercial product.

140 K. The Board shall provide for reasonable exemptions from the permitting requirements, both
 141 procedural and substantive, in order to encourage the development of yard waste composting facilities.
 142 To accomplish this, the Board is authorized to exempt such facilities from regulations governing the
 143 treatment of waste and to establish an expedited approval process. Agricultural operations receiving only
 144 yard waste for composting shall be exempt from permitting requirements provided that (i) the
 145 composting area is located not less than 300 feet from a property boundary, is located not less than
 146 1,000 feet from an occupied dwelling not located on the same property as the composting area, and is
 147 not located within an area designated as a flood plain as defined in § 10.1-600; (ii) the agricultural
 148 operation has at least one acre of ground suitable to receive yard waste for each 150 cubic yards of
 149 finished compost generated; (iii) the total time for the composting process and storage of material that is
 150 being composted or has been composted shall not exceed eighteen months prior to its field application
 151 or sale as a horticultural or agricultural product; and (iv) the owner or operator of the agricultural
 152 operation notifies the Director in writing of his intent to operate a yard waste composting facility and
 153 the amount of land available for the receipt of yard waste. In addition to the requirements set forth in
 154 clauses (i) through (iv) of the preceding sentence, the owner and operator of any agricultural operation
 155 that receives more than 6,000 cubic yards of yard waste generated from property not within the control
 156 of the owner or the operator in any twelve-month period shall be exempt from permitting requirements
 157 provided (i) the owner and operator submit to the Director an annual report describing the volume and
 158 types of yard waste received by such operation for composting and (ii) the operator shall certify that the
 159 yard waste composting facility complies with local ordinances. The Director shall establish a procedure
 160 for the filing of the notices, annual reports and certificates required by this subsection and shall
 161 prescribe the forms for the annual reports and certificates. Nothing contained in this article shall prohibit
 162 the sale of composted yard waste for horticultural or agricultural use, provided that any composted yard
 163 waste sold as a commercial fertilizer with claims of specific nutrient values, promoting plant growth, or
 164 of conditioning soil shall be sold in accordance with the Virginia Fertilizer Act (§ 3.1-106.1 et seq.). As
 165 used in this subsection, "agricultural operation" shall have the same meaning ascribed to it in subsection
 166 B of § 3.1-22.29.

167 The operation of a composting facility as provided in this subsection shall not relieve the owner or
 168 operator of such a facility from liability for any violation of this chapter.

169 L. The Board shall provide for reasonable exemptions from the permitting requirements, both
 170 procedural and substantive, in order to encourage the development of facilities for the decomposition of
 171 vegetative waste. To accomplish this, the Board shall approve an expedited approval process. As used in
 172 this subsection, the decomposition of vegetative waste means a natural aerobic or anaerobic process,
 173 active or passive, which results in the decay and chemical breakdown of the vegetative waste. Nothing
 174 in this subsection shall be construed to prohibit a city or county from exercising its existing authority to
 175 regulate such facilities by requiring, among other things, permits and proof of financial security.

176 M. In receiving and processing applications for permits required by this section, the Director shall
 177 assign top priority to applications which (i) agree to accept nonhazardous recycling residues and (ii)
 178 pledge to charge tipping fees for disposal of nonhazardous recycling residues which do not exceed those
 179 charged for nonhazardous municipal solid waste. Applications meeting these requirements shall be acted
 180 upon no later than six months after they are deemed complete.

181 N. Every solid waste management facility shall be operated in compliance with the regulations
 182 promulgated by the Board pursuant to this chapter. To the extent consistent with federal law, those

183 facilities which were permitted prior to March 15, 1993, and upon which solid waste has been disposed
184 of prior to October 9, 1993, may continue to receive solid waste until they have reached their vertical
185 design capacity, provided that the facility is in compliance with the requirements for liners and leachate
186 control in effect at the time of permit issuance, and further provided that on or before October 9, 1993,
187 the owner or operator of the solid waste management facility submits to the Director:

188 1. An acknowledgement that the owner or operator is familiar with state and federal law and
189 regulations pertaining to solid waste management facilities operating after October 9, 1993, including
190 postclosure care, corrective action and financial responsibility requirements;

191 2. A statement signed by a registered professional engineer that he has reviewed the regulations
192 established by the Department for solid waste management facilities, including the open dump criteria
193 contained therein, that he has inspected the facility and examined the monitoring data compiled for the
194 facility in accordance with applicable regulations and that, on the basis of his inspection and review, has
195 concluded: (i) that the facility is not an open dump, (ii) that the facility does not pose a substantial
196 present or potential hazard to human health and the environment, and (iii) that the leachate or residues
197 from the facility do not pose a threat of contamination or pollution of the air, surface water or ground
198 water in a manner constituting an open dump or resulting in a substantial present or potential hazard to
199 human health or the environment; and

200 3. A statement signed by the owner or operator (i) that the facility complies with applicable financial
201 assurance regulations, and (ii) estimating when the facility will reach its vertical design capacity.

202 The facility may not be enlarged prematurely to avoid compliance with state or federal regulations
203 when such enlargement is not consistent with past operating practices, the permit or modified operating
204 practices to ensure good management.

205 Facilities which are authorized by this subsection to accept waste for disposal beyond the waste
206 boundaries existing on October 9, 1993, shall be as follows:

207 Category 1: Nonhazardous industrial waste facilities that are located on property owned or controlled
208 by the generator of the waste disposed of in the facility;

209 Category 2: Nonhazardous industrial waste facilities other than those that are located on property
210 owned or controlled by the generator of the waste disposed of in the facility, provided that the facility
211 accepts only industrial waste streams which the facility has lawfully accepted prior to July 1, 1995, or
212 other nonhazardous industrial waste as approved by the Department on a case-by-case basis; and

213 Category 3: Facilities that accept only construction-demolition-debris waste as defined in the Board's
214 regulations.

215 The Director may prohibit or restrict the disposal of waste in facilities described in this subsection
216 which contains hazardous constituents as defined in applicable regulations which, in the opinion of the
217 Director, would pose a substantial risk to health or the environment. Facilities described in category 3
218 may expand laterally beyond the waste disposal boundaries existing on October 9, 1993, provided that
219 there is first installed, in such expanded areas, liners and leachate control systems meeting the applicable
220 performance requirements of the Board's regulations, or a demonstration is made to the satisfaction of
221 the Director that such facilities satisfy the applicable variance criteria in the Board's regulations.

222 Owners or operators of facilities which are authorized under this subsection to accept waste for
223 disposal beyond the waste boundaries existing on October 9, 1993, shall ensure that such expanded
224 disposal areas maintain setback distances applicable to such facilities under the Board's current
225 regulations and local ordinances. Prior to the expansion of any facility described in category 2 or 3, the
226 owner or operator shall provide the Director with written notice of the proposed expansion at least sixty
227 days prior to commencement of construction. The notice shall include recent groundwater monitoring
228 data sufficient to determine that the facility does not pose a threat of contamination of groundwater in a
229 manner constituting an open dump or creating a substantial present or potential hazard to human health
230 or the environment. The Director shall evaluate the data included with the notification and may advise
231 the owner or operator of any additional requirements that may be necessary to ensure compliance with
232 applicable laws and prevent a substantial present or potential hazard to health or the environment.

233 Facilities, or portions thereof, which have reached their vertical design capacity shall be closed in
234 compliance with regulations promulgated by the Board.

235 Nothing in this subsection shall alter any requirement for groundwater monitoring, financial
236 responsibility, operator certification, closure, postclosure care, operation, maintenance or corrective action
237 imposed under state or federal law or regulation, or impair the powers of the Director pursuant to
238 § 10.1-1409.

239 O. Portions of a permitted solid waste management facility used solely for the storage of household
240 hazardous waste may store household hazardous waste for a period not to exceed one year, provided that
241 such wastes are properly contained and are segregated to prevent mixing of incompatible wastes.