

§ 130A-310.7. Action for reimbursement; liability of responsible parties; notification of completed remedial action.

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision or rule of law, and subject only to the defenses set forth in this subsection, any person who:

- (1) Discharges or deposits; or
- (2) Contracts or arranges for any discharge or deposit; or
- (3) Accepts for discharge or deposit; or
- (4) Transports or arranges for transport for the purpose of discharge or deposit

any hazardous substance, the result of which discharge or deposit is the existence of an inactive hazardous substance or waste disposal site, shall be considered a responsible party. Neither an innocent landowner who is a bona fide purchaser of the inactive hazardous substance or waste disposal site without knowledge or without a reasonable basis for knowing that hazardous substance or waste disposal had occurred nor a person whose interest or ownership in the inactive hazardous substance or waste disposal site is based on or derived from a security interest in the property shall be considered a responsible party. A responsible party shall be directly liable to the State for any or all of the reasonably necessary expenses of developing and implementing a remedial action program for such site. The Secretary shall bring an action for reimbursement of the Inactive Hazardous Sites Cleanup Fund in the name of the State in the superior court of the county in which the site is located to recover such sum and the cost of bringing the action. The State must show that a danger to the public health or the environment existed and that the State complied with the provisions of this Part.

(b) There shall be no liability under this section for a person who can establish by a preponderance of the evidence that the danger to the public health or the environment caused by the site was caused solely by:

- (1) An act of God; or
- (2) An act of war; or
- (3) An intentional act or omission of a third party (but this defense shall not be available if the act or omission is that of an employee or agent of the defendant, or if the act or omission occurs in connection with a contractual relationship with the defendant); or
- (4) Any combination of the above causes.

(b1) Notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section, there shall be no liability under this section for a person who arranges for recycling of recyclable materials with respect to such materials if that person has complied with all standards, requirements, and criteria set forth in the Superfund Recycling Equity Act of 1999, 42 U.S.C. § 9627, as amended.

(c) The definitions set out in G.S. 130A-310.31(b) apply to this subsection. Any person may submit a written request to the Department for a determination that a site that is subject to this Part has been remediated to unrestricted use standards as provided in Part 5 of Article 9 of Chapter 130A of the General Statutes. A request for a determination that a site has been remediated to unrestricted use standards shall be accompanied by the fee required by G.S. 130A-310.39(a)(2). If the Department determines that the site has been remediated to unrestricted use standards, the Department shall issue a written notification that no further remediation will be required at the site. The notification shall state that no further remediation will be required at the site unless the Department later determines, based on new information or information not previously provided to the Department, that the site has not been remediated to unrestricted use standards or that the Department was provided with false or incomplete information. Under any of those circumstances, the Department may withdraw the notification and require responsible parties to remediate the site to unrestricted use standards. (1987, c. 574, s. 2; 1989, c. 286, s. 6; 1989 (Reg. Sess., 1990), c. 1004, s. 10; c. 1024, s. 30(b); 1997-357, s. 5; 2001-384, s. 11; 2017-163, s. 1.)