

Article 11.

Wastewater Systems.

§ 130A-333. Purpose.

The General Assembly finds and declares that continued installation, at a rapidly and constantly accelerating rate, of septic tank systems and other types of wastewater systems in a faulty or improper manner and in areas where unsuitable soil and population density adversely affect the efficiency and functioning of these systems, has a detrimental effect on the public health and environment through contamination of land, groundwater and surface waters. Recognizing, however, that wastewater can be rendered ecologically safe and the public health protected if methods of wastewater collection, treatment and disposal are properly regulated and recognizing that wastewater collection, treatment and disposal will continue to be necessary to meet the needs of an expanding population, the General Assembly intends to ensure the regulation of wastewater collection, treatment and disposal systems so that these systems may continue to be used, where appropriate, without jeopardizing the public health. (1973, c. 452, s. 3; 1981, c. 949, s. 3; 1983, c. 891, s. 2; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 944, ss. 1, 2.)

§ 130A-334. Definitions.

The following definitions shall apply throughout this Article:

- (1) "Accepted wastewater system" has the same meaning as in G.S. 130A-343.
- (1a) "Approved agency for special inspection" means an individual, corporation, company, association, or partnership that is objective, competent, and independent from the contractor who is responsible for the work that is inspected. The agency shall disclose possible conflicts of interest in a manner such that objectivity can be confirmed.
- (1b) "Approved special inspector" means a person who demonstrates competence to the satisfaction of the professional engineer who designed the wastewater system for the inspection of the construction or operation subject to special inspection.
- (1c) "Construction" means any work at the site of placement done for the purpose of preparing a residence, place of business or place of public assembly for initial occupancy, or subsequent additions or modifications which increase sewage flow.
- (1d) "Construction observation" means the visual observation of the construction and installation of the wastewater system for general conformance with the construction documents prepared by the professional engineer who designed the wastewater system. Construction observation that is conducted by the professional engineer who designed the wastewater system does not include or waive the requirement to conduct special inspections.
- (1e) "Conventional wastewater system" has the same meaning as in G.S. 130A-343.
- (1f) "Department" means the Department of Health and Human Services.
- (1g) "Engineered option permit" means an on-site wastewater system that is permitted pursuant to the rules adopted by the Commission in accordance with this Article, meets the criteria established by G.S. 130A-336.1, and is designed by a professional engineer who is licensed under Chapter 89C of the General Statutes who has expertise in the design of on-site wastewater systems.

- (1h) "Ground absorption system" means a system of tanks, treatment units, nitrification fields, and appurtenances for wastewater collection, treatment, and subsurface disposal.
- (2) Repealed by Session Laws 1985, c. 462, s. 18.
- (2a) "Industrial process wastewater" means any water-carried waste resulting from any process of industry, manufacture, trade, or business.
- (2b) "Licensed geologist" means a person who is licensed as a geologist under the provisions of Chapter 89E of the General Statutes.
- (2c) "Licensed soil scientist" has the same meaning as in G.S. 89F-3.
- (3) "Location" means the initial placement for occupancy of a residence, place of business or place of public assembly.
- (3a) "Maintenance" means normal or routine maintenance including replacement of broken pipes, cleaning, or adjustment to an existing wastewater system.
- (4), (5) Repealed by Session Laws 1985, c. 462, s. 18.
- (6) "Place of business" means a store, warehouse, manufacturing establishment, place of amusement or recreation, service station, office building or any other place where people work.
- (7) "Place of public assembly" means a fairground, auditorium, stadium, church, campground, theater or any other place where people assemble.
- (7a) "Plat" means a property survey prepared by a registered land surveyor, drawn to a scale of one inch equals no more than 60 feet, that includes: the specific location of the proposed facility and appurtenances, the site for the proposed wastewater system, and the location of water supplies and surface waters. "Plat" also means, for subdivision lots approved by the local planning authority if a local planning authority exists at the time of application for a permit under this Article, a copy of the subdivision plat that has been recorded with the county register of deeds and is accompanied by a site plan that is drawn to scale.
- (7b) "Pretreatment" means any biological, chemical, or physical process or system for improving wastewater quality and reducing wastewater constituents prior to final treatment and disposal in a subsurface wastewater system and includes, but is not limited to aeration, clarification, digestion, disinfection, filtration, separation, and settling.
- (7c) "Professional engineer" has the same meaning as in G.S. 89C-3.
- (8) "Public or community wastewater system" means a single system of wastewater collection, treatment and disposal owned and operated by a sanitary district, a metropolitan sewage district, a water and sewer authority, a county or municipality or a public utility.
- (9) "Relocation" means the displacement of a residence or place of business from one site to another.
- (9a) "Repair" means the extension, alteration, replacement, or relocation of existing components of a wastewater system. Replacement of a damaged gravity distribution box by an on-site wastewater contractor certified under Article 5 of Chapter 90A of the General Statutes shall not constitute a repair to a permitted wastewater system.

- (10) "Residence" means a private home, dwelling unit in a multiple family structure, hotel, motel, summer camp, labor work camp, manufactured home, institution or any other place where people reside.
- (10a) "Secretary" means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.
- (11) Repealed by Session Laws 1992, c. 944, s. 3.
- (12) "Septic tank system" means a subsurface wastewater system consisting of a settling tank and a subsurface disposal field.
- (13) "Sewage" means the liquid and solid human body waste and liquid waste generated by water-using fixtures and appliances, including those associated with foodhandling. The term does not include industrial process wastewater or sewage that is combined with industrial process wastewater.
- (13a) "Site plan" means a drawing not necessarily drawn to scale that shows the existing and proposed property lines with dimensions, the location of the facility and appurtenances, the site for the proposed wastewater system, and the location of water supplies and surface waters.
- (13b) "Special inspection" means a required inspection of the materials, installation, fabrication, erection, or placement of components and systems that require special expertise to ensure compliance with referenced standards and the construction documents prepared by the professional engineer.
- (14) "Wastewater" means any sewage or industrial process wastewater discharged, transmitted, or collected from a residence, place of business, place of public assembly, or other places into a wastewater system.
- (14a) "Wastewater dispersal product" means a product approved by the Department for dispersing wastewater effluent within the subsurface dispersal field in a ground absorption system.
- (15) "Wastewater system" means a system of wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal in single or multiple components, including a ground absorption system, privy, septic tank system, public or community wastewater system, wastewater reuse or recycle system, mechanical or biological wastewater treatment system, any other similar system, and any chemical toilet used only for human waste. (1973, c. 452, s. 4; 1981, c. 949, s. 3; 1983, c. 891, s. 2; 1985, c. 462, s. 18; c. 487, s. 9; 1987, c. 435; 1991, c. 256, s. 1; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 944, s. 3; c. 1028, s. 4; 1995, c. 285, s. 1; 1995 (Reg. Sess., 1996), c. 585, s. 1; 1996, 2nd Ex. Sess., c. 18, ss. 27.31(a), (b); 1997-443, s. 11A.82; 2011-145, s. 13.3(bbb); 2014-120, s. 40(a); 2015-241, s. 14.30(v); 2015-286, s. 4.14(a); 2017-139, s. 2; 2018-114, ss. 11(a), (b).)

§ 130A-335. Wastewater collection, treatment and disposal; rules.

(a) A person owning or controlling a residence, place of business or a place of public assembly shall provide an approved wastewater system. Except as may be allowed under another provision of law, all wastewater from water-using fixtures and appliances connected to a water supply source shall discharge to the approved wastewater system. A wastewater system may include components for collection, treatment and disposal of wastewater.

(a1) Any proposed site for a residence, place of business, or a place of public assembly located in an area that is not served by an approved wastewater system for which a new wastewater system is proposed or repair is necessary for compliance may be evaluated for soil conditions and

site features by a person licensed pursuant to Chapter 89F of the General Statutes as a licensed soil scientist. For purposes of this subsection, "site features" include topography and landscape position; soil characteristics (morphology); soil wetness; soil depth; restrictive horizons; available space; and other applicable factors that involve accepted public health principles. A person licensed pursuant to Chapter 89E of the General Statutes as a licensed geologist may evaluate the proposed site or repair area, as applicable, for geologic and hydrogeologic conditions.

(a2) Evaluations conducted by a licensed soil scientist or a licensed geologist pursuant to subsection (a1) of this section shall be used in developing design and construction features for a new proposed wastewater system or a proposed repair project for an existing wastewater system, including the addressing of any special hydrologic conditions that may be required under the applicable rules for an improvement permit or a construction authorization, shall be approved by the applicable permitting authorities under G.S. 130A-336 provided both of the following conditions are met:

- (1) The evaluation of soil conditions, site features, or geologic and hydrogeologic conditions satisfies all requirements of this Article. The evaluation shall not cover areas outside the scope of the applicable license.
- (2) The licensed soil scientist or licensed geologist conducting the evaluation maintains an errors and omissions liability insurance policy issued by an insurer licensed under Chapter 58 of the General Statutes in an amount commensurate with the risk.

(a3) When an applicant for an improvement permit submits an application and a soil evaluation pursuant to subsection (a2) of this section, the local health department shall, within 10 business days of receiving the application, take one of the following actions:

- (1) Issue the improvement permit.
- (2) Deny the permit application and provide a signed, written report to the applicant citing the applicable rule(s) for permit denial.
- (3) Notify the applicant that additional information is needed if the application is incomplete.

(a4) If a local health department fails to act on an application for an improvement permit submitted pursuant to subsection (a3) of this section within 10 business days of receipt of a complete application, the local health department shall issue the improvement permit.

(a5) When an applicant for a construction authorization submits an application along with any necessary signed and sealed plans or evaluations, as required by the local health department, conducted by a person licensed pursuant to Chapter 89C of the General Statutes as a licensed engineer or a person certified pursuant to Article 5 of Chapter 90A of the General Statutes as an Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator, the local health department shall, within 10 business days of receiving the application, take one of the following actions:

- (1) Approve the permit application.
- (2) Deny the permit application and provide a signed, written report to the applicant citing the applicable rule(s) for permit denial.
- (3) Notify the applicant that additional information is needed if the application is incomplete.

(a6) If a local health department fails to act on an application for a construction authorization submitted pursuant to subsection (a5) of this section within 10 business days of receipt of a complete application, the local health department shall issue the construction authorization.

(a7) The wastewater system contractor shall notify the local health department, or professional engineer or Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator, as applicable, prior to the start of construction of the proposed wastewater system by telephone or other electronic means. The local health department, professional engineer, or Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator shall retain the ability to delay construction until determination of site conditions. The applicant or the system contractor certified under rules established by the North Carolina On-Site Wastewater Contractors and Inspectors Certification Board shall notify the local health department of completion of the wastewater system for the inspection and issuance of the operation permit pursuant to G.S. 130A-337 after determination of compliance with the construction authorization.

(a8) The Department, the Department's authorized agents, and the local health departments shall be discharged and released from any liabilities, duties, and responsibilities imposed by statute or in common law from any claim arising out of or attributed to evaluations, submittals, or actions from a licensed soil scientist or licensed geologist pursuant to subsection (a2) of this section. The Department, the Department's authorized agents, and the local health departments shall be discharged and released from any liabilities, duties, and responsibilities imposed by statute or in common law from any claim arising out of or attributed to plans, evaluations, preconstruction conference findings, submittals, or actions from a person licensed pursuant to Chapter 89C of the General Statutes as a licensed engineer or a person certified pursuant to Article 5 of Chapter 90A of the General Statutes as an Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator in subsections (a2), (a5), and (a7) of this section. The Department, the Department's authorized agents, and the local health departments shall be responsible and bear liability for their actions and evaluations and other obligations under State law or rule, including the issuance of the operations permit pursuant to G.S. 130A-337.

(b) All wastewater systems shall either (i) be regulated by the Department under rules adopted by the Commission or (ii) conform with the engineered option permit criteria set forth in G.S. 130A-336.1 and under rules adopted by the Commission except for the following wastewater systems that shall be regulated by the Department under rules adopted by the Environmental Management Commission:

- (1) Wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal systems designed to discharge effluent to the land surface or surface waters.
- (2) Wastewater systems designed for groundwater remediation, groundwater injection, or landfill leachate collection and disposal.
- (3) Wastewater systems designed for the complete recycle or reuse of industrial process wastewater.
- (4) Gray water systems as defined in G.S. 143-350.

(c) A wastewater system subject to approval under rules of the Commission shall be reviewed and approved under rules of a local board of health in the following circumstances:

- (1) The local board of health, on its own motion, has requested the Department to review its proposed rules concerning wastewater systems; and
- (2) The local board of health has adopted by reference the wastewater system rules adopted by the Commission, with any more stringent modifications or additions deemed necessary by the local board of health to protect the public health. Local boards of health shall use historical experience to establish modifications or additions to rules established by the Commission; and
- (3) The Department has found that the rules, including modifications or additions to the Commission's rules, of the local board of health concerning wastewater

collection, treatment and disposal systems are at least as stringent as rules adopted by the Commission and are sufficient and necessary to safeguard the public health.

(c1) The rules adopted by the Commission for wastewater systems approved under the engineered option permit criteria pursuant to G.S. 130A-336.1 shall be, at a minimum, as stringent as the rules for wastewater systems established by the Commission.

(c2) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a municipality shall not prohibit or regulate by ordinance or enforce an existing ordinance regulating the use of off-site wastewater systems or other systems approved by the Department under rules adopted by the Commission when the proposed system meets the specific conditions of the approval.

(d) The Department may, upon its own motion, upon the request of a local board of health or upon the request of a citizen of an affected county, review its findings under subsection (c) of this section.

The Department shall review its findings under subsection (c) of this section upon modification by the Commission of the rules applicable to wastewater systems. The Department may deny, suspend, or revoke the approval of local board of health wastewater system rules upon a finding that the local wastewater rules are not as stringent as rules adopted by the Commission, are not sufficient and necessary to safeguard the public health, or are not being enforced. Suspension and revocation of approval shall be in accordance with G.S. 130A-23.

(d1) The Department or owner of a wastewater system may file a written complaint with the North Carolina Board of Examiners for Engineers and Surveyors in accordance with rules and procedures adopted by the Board pursuant to Chapter 89C of the General Statutes citing failure of a professional engineer to adhere to the rules adopted by the Commission pursuant to this Article. The Department or owner of a wastewater system may file a written complaint with the North Carolina Board of Licensed Soil Scientists in accordance with rules and procedures adopted by the Board pursuant to Chapter 89F of the General Statutes citing failure of a licensed soil scientist to adhere to the rules adopted by the Commission pursuant to this Article. The Department or owner of a wastewater system may file a written complaint with the North Carolina Board for Licensing of Geologists in accordance with rules and procedures adopted by the Board pursuant to Chapter 89E of the General Statutes citing failure of a licensed geologist to adhere to the rules adopted by the Commission pursuant to this Article. The Department or owner of a wastewater system may file a written complaint with the North Carolina On-Site Wastewater Contractors and Inspectors Certification Board in accordance with rules and procedures adopted by the Board pursuant to Article 5 of Chapter 90A of the General Statutes citing failure of a contractor to adhere to the rules adopted by the Commission pursuant to this Article.

(e) The rules of the Commission and the rules of the local board of health shall address at least the following: Wastewater characteristics; Design unit; Design capacity; Design volume; Criteria for the design, installation, operation, maintenance and performance of wastewater collection, treatment and disposal systems; Soil morphology and drainage; Topography and landscape position; Depth to seasonally high water table, rock and water impeding formations; Proximity to water supply wells, shellfish waters, estuaries, marshes, wetlands, areas subject to frequent flooding, streams, lakes, swamps and other bodies of surface or groundwaters; Density of wastewater collection, treatment and disposal systems in a geographical area; Requirements for issuance, suspension and revocation of permits; and Other factors which affect the effective operation and performance of wastewater collection, treatment and disposal systems. The rules regarding required design capacity and required design volume for wastewater systems shall

provide that exceptions may be granted upon a showing that a system is adequate to meet actual daily water consumption.

(f) The rules of the Commission and the rules of the local board of health shall classify systems of wastewater collection, treatment and disposal according to size, type of treatment and any other appropriate factors. The rules shall provide construction requirements, including pretreatment and system control requirements, standards for operation, maintenance, monitoring, reporting, and ownership requirements for each classification of systems of wastewater collection, treatment and disposal in order to prevent, as far as reasonably possible, any contamination of the land, groundwater and surface waters. The Department and local health departments may impose conditions on the issuance of permits and may revoke the permits for failure of the system to satisfy the conditions, the rules, or this Article. Permits other than improvement permits shall be valid for a period prescribed by rule. Improvement permits shall be valid upon a showing satisfactory to the Department or the local health department that the site and soil conditions are unaltered, that the facility, design wastewater flow, and wastewater characteristics are not increased, and that a wastewater system can be installed that meets the permitting requirements in effect on the date the improvement permit was issued. Improvement permits for which a plat is provided shall be valid without expiration. Improvement permits for which a site plan is provided shall be valid for five years. The period of time for which the permit is valid and a statement that the permit is subject to revocation if the site plan or plat, whichever is applicable, or the intended use changes shall be displayed prominently on both the application form for the permit and the permit.

(f1) A preconstruction conference with the owner or developer, or an agent of the owner or developer, and a representative of the local health department shall be required for any construction authorization issued with an improvement permit under G.S. 130A-336 when the authorization is greater than five years old. Following the conference, the local health department shall advise the owner or developer of any rule changes for wastewater system construction incorporating current technology that can reasonably be expected to improve the performance of the system. The local health department shall issue a revised construction authorization incorporating the rule changes upon the written request of the owner or developer.

(f2) For each septic tank system that is designed to treat 3,000 gallons per day or less of sewage, rules adopted pursuant to subsection (f) of this section shall require the use of an effluent filter to reduce the total suspended solids entering the drainfield and the use of an access device for each compartment of the septic tank to provide access to the compartment in order to facilitate maintenance of the septic tank. The Commission shall not adopt specifications for the effluent filter and access device that exceed the requirements of G.S. 130A-335.1. Neither this section nor G.S. 130A-335.1 shall be construed to prohibit the use of an effluent filter or access device that exceeds the requirements of G.S. 130A-335.1. The Department shall approve effluent filters that meet the requirements of this section, G.S. 130A-335.1, and rules adopted by the Commission.

(g) Prior to denial of an improvement permit, the local health department shall advise the applicant of possible site modifications or alternative systems, and shall provide a brief description of those systems. When an improvement permit is denied, the local health department shall issue the site evaluation in writing stating the reasons for the unsuitable classification. The evaluation shall also inform the applicant of the right to an informal review by the Department, the right to appeal under G.S. 130A-24, and to have the appeal held in the county in which the site for which the improvement permit was requested is located.

(h) Except as provided in this subsection, a chemical or portable toilet may be placed at any location where the chemical or portable toilet can be operated and maintained under sanitary

conditions. A chemical or portable toilet shall not be used as a replacement or substitute for a water closet or urinal where a water closet or urinal connected to a permanent wastewater treatment system is required by the North Carolina State Building Code, except that a chemical or portable toilet may be used to supplement a water closet or urinal during periods of peak use. A chemical or portable toilet shall not be used as an alternative to the repair of a water closet, urinal, or wastewater treatment system. It shall be unlawful to discharge sewage or other waste from a chemical or portable toilet used for human waste except into a wastewater system that has been approved by the Department under rules adopted by the Commission or by the Environmental Management Commission or at a site that is permitted by the Department under G.S. 130A-291.1.

(i) The Department shall notify the Department of Revenue of all wastewater dispersal product approvals and revocations within 60 days of approval or revocation. (1957, c. 1357, s. 1; 1973, c. 471, s. 1; c. 476, s. 128; c. 860; 1977, c. 857, s. 1; 1979, c. 788, s. 2; 1981, c. 949, s. 3; c. 1127, s. 47; 1983, c. 891, s. 2; 1987, c. 267, ss. 1, 2; 1989, c. 727, s. 147; c. 764, ss. 6, 7; 1989 (Reg. Sess., 1990), c. 1075, s. 2; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 944, s. 4; 1993, c. 173, s. 5; 1995, c. 285, s. 1; 1995 (Reg. Sess., 1996), c. 585, s. 2; 1996, 2nd Ex. Sess., c. 18, s. 27.31(c); 1998-126, s. 1; 1998-217, s. 46(a); 2008-143, s. 13; 2011-394, s. 12(c); 2014-115, s. 10.1; 2014-120, s. 40(b); 2015-286, s. 4.14(b); 2017-139, s. 3; 2017-209, s. 18(a); 2018-114, s. 11(c); 2019-126, s. 1; 2019-131, s. 1; 2019-177, s. 7.1; 2022-11, s. 5(a).)

§ 130A-335.1. Effluent filters and access devices for certain septic tank systems.

(a) The person who manufactures, installs, repairs, or pumps any septic tank to be installed in this State as a part of a septic tank system that is designed to treat 3,000 gallons per day or less of sewage shall provide an effluent filter approved by the Department pursuant to the requirements of G.S. 130A-335, this section, and rules adopted by the Commission. Any person who manufactures, installs, repairs, or pumps systems described in this section may purchase and install any approved filters on the systems. The person who installs the effluent filter shall install the effluent filter as a part of the septic tank system in accordance with the specifications provided by the manufacturer of the effluent filter. An effluent filter shall:

- (1) Be made of materials that are capable of withstanding the corrosives to which septic tank systems are normally subject.
- (2) Prevent solid material larger than one-sixteenth of an inch, as measured along the shortest axis of the material, from entering the drainfield.
- (3) Be designed and constructed to allow for routine maintenance.
- (4) Be designed and constructed so as not to require maintenance more frequently than once in any three-year period under normally anticipated use.

(b) The access device required by G.S. 130A-335(f) shall provide access to each compartment of a septic tank for inspection and maintenance either by means of an opening in the top of the septic tank or by a riser assembly and shall include an appropriate cover. The access device shall:

- (1) Be of sufficient size to facilitate inspection and service.
- (2) Be designed and constructed to equal or exceed the minimum loading specifications applicable to the septic tank.
- (3) Prevent water entry.
- (4) Come to within six inches of the finished grade.
- (5) Be visibly marked so that the access device can be readily located. (1998-126, s. 2; 2006-255, s. 4; 2006-264, s. 63(a).)

§ 130A-336. Improvement permit and construction authorization required.

(a) Any proposed site for a residence, place of business, or place of public assembly in an area not served by an approved wastewater system shall be evaluated by either (i) the local health department in accordance with rules adopted pursuant to this Article or (ii) by a professional engineer, licensed soil scientist, or licensed geologist acting within the engineer's, soil scientist's, or geologist's scope of work, as applicable, and pursuant to the conditions of the engineered option permit in G.S. 130A-336.1 or the Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator permit option in G.S. 130A-336.2. An improvement permit issued by a local health department shall include:

- (1) For permits that are valid without expiration, a plat, or, for permits that are valid for five years, a site plan.
- (2) A description of the facility the proposed site is to serve.
- (3) The proposed wastewater system and its location.
- (4) The design wastewater flow and characteristics.
- (5) The conditions for any site modifications.
- (6) Any other information required by the rules of the Commission.

Neither the improvement permit nor the construction authorization shall be affected by change of ownership of the site for the wastewater system provided both the site for the wastewater system and the facility the system serves are unchanged and remain under the ownership or control of the person owning the facility. No person shall commence or assist in the construction, location, or relocation of a residence, place of business, or place of public assembly in an area not served by an approved wastewater system unless an improvement permit and a construction authorization are obtained from the local health department unless that person is acting in accordance with the conditions and criteria of an engineered option permit pursuant to G.S. 130A-336.1 or the Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator permit option pursuant to G.S. 130A-336.2. This requirement shall not apply to a manufactured residence exhibited for sale or stored for later sale and intended to be located at another site after sale.

(b) The local health department shall issue a construction authorization authorizing work to proceed and the installation or repair of a wastewater system when it has determined after a field investigation that the system can be installed and operated in compliance with this Article and rules adopted pursuant to this Article. This construction authorization shall be valid for a period equal to the period of validity of the improvement permit and may be issued at the same time the improvement permit is issued. No person shall commence or assist in the installation, construction, or repair of a wastewater system unless an improvement permit and a construction authorization have been obtained from the Department or the local health department unless that person is acting in accordance with the conditions and criteria of an engineered option permit pursuant to G.S. 130A-336.1 or the Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator permit option pursuant to G.S. 130A-336.2. No improvement permit or construction authorization shall be required for maintenance of a wastewater system. The Department and the local health department may impose conditions on the issuance of an improvement permit and a construction authorization.

(b1) An improvement permit or construction authorization issued by a local health department from January 1, 2000, to January 1, 2015, which has not been acted on and would have otherwise expired, shall remain valid until January 1, 2020, without penalty, unless there are changes in the hydraulic flows or wastewater characteristics from the original local health department evaluation. Permits are transferrable with ownership of the property. Permits shall retain the site, soil evaluations, and construction conditions of the original permit. Site activities

begun or completed pursuant to requirements from the local health department under the original permit, however, shall not be construed to be altered conditions and shall not constitute a basis for refusal of the permit extension. The property owner may contract with a person licensed pursuant to Chapter 89F of the General Statutes as a licensed soil scientist to conduct a site verification to determine whether the conditions of the original permit are unchanged. Written verification by the licensed soil scientist shall be accepted by the local health department, used in lieu of verification by the local health department, and be attached to the permit.

(c) Unless the Commission otherwise provides by rule, plans, and specifications for all wastewater systems designed for the collection, treatment, and disposal of industrial process wastewater shall be reviewed and approved by the Department prior to the issuance of a construction authorization by the local health department.

(d) If a local health department repeatedly fails to issue or deny improvement permits for conventional or accepted septic tank systems within 60 days, or within 90 days for provisional or innovative systems, after receiving completed applications for the permits, then the Department of Health and Human Services may withhold public health funding from that local health department. (1973, c. 452, s. 5; c. 476, s. 128; 1981, c. 949, s. 3; 1983, c. 891, s. 2; 1985, c. 273; 1991, c. 256, s. 2; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 944, s. 5; 1995, c. 285, s. 1; 1995 (Reg. Sess., 1996), c. 585, s. 3; 1996, 2nd Ex. Sess., c. 18, s. 27.31(d)-(f); 1997-443, ss. 11A.83, 11A.119(a); 2014-120, s. 40(c); 2015-241, s. 14.30(u); 2015-286, s. 4.14(g); 2017-211, s. 19; 2018-114, s. 9; 2022-11, s. 5(b).)

§ 130A-336.1. Alternative process for wastewater system approvals.

(a) Engineered Option Permit Authorized. – A professional engineer licensed under Chapter 89C of the General Statutes may, at the direction of the owner of a proposed wastewater system who wishes to utilize the engineered option permit, prepare signed and sealed drawings, specifications, plans, and reports for the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of the wastewater system in accordance with this section and rules adopted thereunder.

(b) Notice of Intent to Construct. – Prior to commencing or assisting in the construction, siting, or relocation of a wastewater system, the owner of a proposed wastewater system who wishes to utilize the engineered option permit, or a professional engineer authorized as the legal representative of the owner, shall submit to the local health department with jurisdiction over the location of the proposed wastewater system a notice of intent to construct a wastewater system utilizing the engineered permit option. The Department shall develop a common form for use as the notice of intent to construct that includes all of the following:

- (1) The owner's name, address, e-mail address, and telephone number.
- (2) The professional engineer's name, license number, address, e-mail address, and telephone number.
- (3) For the professional engineer, the licensed soil scientist, the licensed geologist, and any on-site wastewater contractors, proof of errors and omissions insurance coverage or other appropriate liability insurance.
- (4) A description of the facility the proposed site is to serve and any factors that would affect the wastewater load.
- (5) The type of proposed wastewater system and its location.
- (6) The design wastewater flow and characteristics.
- (7) Any proposed landscape, site, drainage, or soil modifications.
- (8) A soil evaluation that is conducted and signed and sealed by either a licensed soil scientist or licensed geologist.

- (9) A plat, as defined in G.S. 130A-334(7a), or a site plan, as defined in G.S. 130A-334(13a).

(c) **Completeness Review for Notice of Intent to Construct.** – The local health department shall determine whether a notice of intent to construct, as required pursuant subsection (b) of this section, is complete within 15 business days after the local health department receives the notice of intent to construct. A determination of completeness means that the notice of intent to construct includes all of the required components. If the local health department determines that the notice of intent to construct is incomplete, the department shall notify the owner or the professional engineer of the components needed to complete the notice. The owner or professional engineer may submit additional information to the department to cure the deficiencies in the notice. The local health department shall make a final determination as to whether the notice of intent to construct is complete within 10 business days after the department receives the additional information from the owner or professional engineer. If the department fails to act within any time period set out in this subsection, the owner or professional engineer may treat the failure to act as a determination of completeness.

(d) **Submission of Notice of Intent to Construct to Department for Certain Systems.** – Prior to commencing in the construction, siting, or relocation of a wastewater system designed (i) for the collection, treatment, and disposal of industrial process wastewater or (ii) to treat greater than 3,000 gallons per day, the owner of a proposed wastewater system who wishes to utilize the engineered option permit, or a professional engineer authorized as the legal representative of the owner, shall provide to the Department a duplicate copy of the notice of intent to construct submitted to the local health department required pursuant to subsection (b) of this section.

(e) **Site Design, Construction, and Activities.** –

- (1) The professional engineer designing the proposed wastewater system shall use recognized principles and practices of engineering and applicable rules of the Commission in the calculations and design of the wastewater system. The investigations and findings of the professional engineer shall include, at a minimum, the information required in rules adopted by the Commission pursuant to G.S. 130A-335(e). The professional engineer may, at the engineer's discretion, employ pretreatment technologies not yet approved in this State.
- (2) Notwithstanding G.S. 130A-335(a1), the owner of the proposed wastewater system shall employ a person licensed pursuant to Chapter 89F of the General Statutes as a licensed soil scientist to conduct soil and site evaluations and, as applicable, a person licensed pursuant to Chapter 89E of the General Statutes as a licensed geologist to evaluate geologic and hydrogeologic conditions.
- (3) The professional engineer designing the proposed wastewater system:
 - a. Shall be responsible for the engineer's scope of work, including all aspects of the design and any drawings, specifications, plans, or reports that are signed and sealed by the professional engineer.
 - b. Shall prepare a signed and sealed statement of special inspections that includes the following items:
 1. The materials, systems, components, and work subject to special inspection or testing.
 2. The type and extent of each special inspection and each test.
 3. The frequency of each type of special inspection. For purposes of this sub-sub-subdivision, frequency of special inspections

shall be required on either a continuous or periodic basis. Continuous special inspections mean the full-time observation of work requiring special inspection by an approved special inspector who is present in the area where the work is performed. Periodic special inspections mean the part-time or intermittent observation of work requiring a special inspection by an approved special inspector who is present in the area where the work is or has been performed and at the completion of the work.

- c. May assist the owner of the proposed wastewater system with the selection of an on-site wastewater system contractor certified pursuant to Article 5 of Chapter 90A of the General Statutes.
- (4) An on-site wastewater system contractor, licensed pursuant to Article 5 of Chapter 90A of the General Statutes, who is employed by the owner of the wastewater system, shall:
- a. Be responsible for all aspects of the construction and installation of the wastewater system or components of the wastewater system, including adherence to the design, specifications, and any special inspections that are prepared, signed, and sealed by the professional engineer in accordance with all the applicable provisions of this section.
 - b. Submit a signed and dated statement of responsibility to the owner of the wastewater system, prior to the commencement of work, that contains acknowledgement and awareness of the requirements in the professional engineer's statement of special inspections.
- (5) Where the professional engineer's designs, plans, and specifications call for the installation of a conventional wastewater system, such designs, plans, and specifications shall allow for the installation of an accepted system in lieu of a conventional system in accordance with the accepted system approval.
- (6) In addition to the requirements of this section, the owner, the professional engineer designing the proposed wastewater system, and any on-site wastewater system contractors employed to construct or install the wastewater system shall comply with applicable federal, State, and local laws, regulations, rules, and ordinances.
- (f) No Public Liability. – The Department, the Department's authorized agents, or local health departments shall have no liability for wastewater systems designed, constructed, and installed pursuant to a engineered option permit.
- (g) Inspections, Construction Observations, and Reports. –
- (1) Site visits. – The local health department may, at any time, conduct a site visit of the wastewater system.
 - (2) Construction observations. – The professional engineer who designed the wastewater system shall make periodic visits to the site, at intervals appropriate to the stage of construction, to observe the progress and quality of the construction and to determine, generally, if the construction is proceeding in accordance with the engineer's plans and specifications.
 - (3) Special inspections. – The owner of the proposed wastewater system shall employ one or more approved special inspectors to conduct special inspections during the construction of the wastewater system. The professional engineer

who designed the wastewater system, or the engineer's personnel, may function as an approved agency to conduct special inspections required by this subdivision. The professional engineer's personnel shall only operate as an approved agency for special inspections if the personnel can demonstrate competence and relevant experience or training. For purposes of this subdivision, experience or training shall be considered relevant when the documented experience or training is related in complexity to the same type of special inspection activities for projects of similar complexity and material qualities.

- (4) Inspection reports. – Approved special inspectors shall maintain and furnish all inspection records to the professional engineer who designed the wastewater system. The records shall indicate whether the work inspected was completed in conformance with the engineer's design and specifications. Any discrepancies identified between the completed work and the engineer's design shall be brought to the immediate attention of the on-site wastewater system contractor for correction. If discrepancies are not corrected, they shall be brought to the attention of the professional engineer who designed the wastewater system prior to completion of work. A final inspection report documenting the required special inspections and the correction of any identified discrepancies shall be provided to the professional engineer and the owner of the wastewater system for review at the post-construction conference required pursuant to subsection (j) of this section.

(h) Local Authority. – This section shall not relieve the owner or operator of a wastewater system from complying with any and all modifications or additions to rules adopted by a local health department to protect public health pursuant to G.S. 130A-335(c) that are required at the time the owner or operator submits the notice of intent to construct pursuant to G.S. 130A-336.1(b). The local health department shall notify the owner or operator of the wastewater system of any issues of compliance related to such modifications or additions.

(i) Operations and Management. –

- (1) The professional engineer designing the wastewater system shall establish a written operations and management program based on the size and complexity of the wastewater system and shall provide the program to the owner.
- (2) The owner shall enter into a contract with a water pollution control system operator certified pursuant to Part 1 of Article 3 of Chapter 90A of the General Statutes and who is selected from the list of certified operators maintained by the Division of Water Resources in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for operation and maintenance of the wastewater system in accordance with rules adopted by the Commission.
- (3) The owner of the wastewater system shall be responsible for the continued adherence to the operations and management program established by the professional engineer pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(j) Post-Construction Conference. – The professional engineer designing the wastewater system shall hold a post-construction conference with the owner of the wastewater system; the licensed soil scientist or licensed geologist who performed the soils evaluation for the wastewater system; the on-site wastewater system contractor, certified pursuant to Article 5 of Chapter 90A of the General Statutes, who installed the wastewater system; the certified operator of the

wastewater system, if any; and representatives from the local health department and, as applicable, the Department. The post-construction conference shall include start-up of the wastewater system and any required verification of system design or system components. The post-construction conference required by this subsection may be waived for Type I, II, and III wastewater systems, as listed in 15A NCAC 18A.1961 Table V(a), upon written request by the professional engineer and written approval by the owner of the wastewater system.

(k) Required Documentation. –

- (1) At the completion of the post-construction conference conducted pursuant to subsection (j) of this section, the professional engineer who designed the wastewater system shall deliver to the owner signed, sealed, and dated copies of the engineer's report, which, for purposes of this subsection, shall include the following:
 - a. The evaluation of soil conditions and site features as prepared by either the licensed soil scientist or licensed geologist.
 - b. The drawings, specifications, plans, and reports of the wastewater system, including the statement of special inspections required pursuant to G.S. 130A-336.1(e)(3); the on-site wastewater system contractor's signed statement of responsibility required pursuant to G.S. 130A-336.1(e)(4); records of all special inspections; and the final inspection report documenting the correction of any identified discrepancies required pursuant to subsection (g) of this section.
 - c. The operator's management program manual that includes a copy of the contract with the certified water pollution control system operator required pursuant to subsection (i) of this section.
 - d. Any reports and findings related to the design and installation of the wastewater system.
- (2) Upon reviewing the professional engineer's report, the owner of the wastewater system shall sign and notarize the report as having been received.

(l) Reporting Requirements. –

- (1) The owner of the wastewater system shall submit the following to the local health department:
 - a. A copy of the professional engineer's report required pursuant to G.S. 130A-336.1(k)(1).
 - b. A copy of the operations and management program.
 - c. The fee required pursuant to subsection (n) of this section.
 - d. A notarized letter that documents the owner's acceptance of the system from the professional engineer.
- (2) The owner of any wastewater system that is subject to subsection (d) of this section shall deliver to the Department copies of the engineer's report, as described G.S. 130A-336.1(k)(1).

(m) Authorization to Operate. – Within 15 business days of receipt of the documents and fees required pursuant to G.S. 130A-336.1(l)(1), the local health department shall issue the owner a letter of confirmation that states the documents and information contained therein have been received and that the wastewater system may operate in accordance with rules adopted by the Commission.

(n) Fees. – The local health department may assess a fee for the engineered option permit of up to thirty percent (30%) of the cumulative total of the fees the department has established to obtain an improvement permit, an authorization to construct, and an operations permit for wastewater systems under its jurisdiction. The fee shall only be used by the department in support of its work pursuant to this section to conduct site inspections; support the department's staff participation at post-construction conference meetings; and archive the engineered permit with the county register of deeds or other recordation of the wastewater system as required.

(o) Change in System Ownership. – A wastewater system authorized pursuant to this section shall not be affected by change in ownership of the site for the wastewater system, provided both the site for the wastewater system and the facility the system serves are unchanged and remain under the ownership or control of the person owning the facility.

(p) Remedies. – Notwithstanding any other provision of this section or any other provision of law, owners; operators; professional engineers who utilize the engineered option permit, who prepare drawings, specifications, plans, and reports; licensed soil scientists; licensed geologists; and on-site wastewater system contractors employed for the construction or installation of the wastewater system shall be subject to the provisions and remedies provided to the Department and local health departments pursuant to Article 1 of this Chapter.

(q) Rule Making. – The Commission shall adopt rules to implement the provisions of this section.

(r) Reports. – The Department shall report to the Environmental Review Commission and the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services on or before January 1, 2017, and annually thereafter, on the implementation and effectiveness of this section. For the report due on or before January 1, 2017, the Department shall specifically study (i) whether the engineered option permit resulted in a reduction in the length of time improvement permits or authorizations to construct are pending; (ii) whether the engineered option permit resulted in increased system failures or other adverse impacts; (iii) if the engineered option permit resulted in new or increased environmental or public health impacts; (iv) an amount of errors and omissions insurance or other liability sufficient for covering professional engineers, licensed soil scientists, licensed geologists, and contractors who employ the engineered option permit; and (v) the fees charged by local health departments to administer the engineered option permit pursuant to subsection (n) of this section. The Department may include recommendations, including any legislative proposals, in its reports to the Commission and Committee. (2015-286, s. 4.14(c); 2017-209, s. 18(b); 2021-117, s. 12A; 2022-11, s. 5(c).)

§ 130A-336.2. Alternative wastewater system approvals for nonengineered systems.

(a) Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator. – An individual licensed as a soil scientist pursuant to Chapter 89F of the General Statutes and further certified under conditions developed and administered by the North Carolina On-Site Wastewater Contractors and Inspectors Certification Board may, at the direction of the owner of a proposed wastewater system, prepare signed and sealed soil and site evaluations, specifications, plans, and reports for the site layout, construction, operation, and maintenance of a wastewater system in accordance with this section and rules adopted pursuant to this section. An Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator shall not perform any of the functions performed by a professional engineer for engineered wastewater systems described in G.S. 130A-336.1.

(b) Notice of Intent to Construct. – Prior to commencing or assisting in the construction, siting, relocation, or repair of a wastewater system, the owner of a proposed wastewater system

who wishes to use an Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator shall submit a notice of intent to construct a wastewater system using an Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator to the local health department with jurisdiction over the location of the proposed wastewater system. The Department of Health and Human Services shall develop a common form for use as a notice of intent to construct that includes all of the following:

- (1) The owner's name, e-mail address, mailing address, and phone number.
- (2) The Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator's name, certification number, mailing address, e-mail address, and telephone number.
- (3) The physical location of proposed site.
- (4) Proof of errors and omissions, liability, or other insurance adequate for the proposed wastewater system.
- (5) A description of the facility the proposed site is to serve and any factors that would affect the wastewater load.
- (6) The type of wastewater system proposed.
- (7) The estimated wastewater flow and wastewater characteristics.
- (8) Any proposed landscape, site, drainage, or soil modifications.
- (9) An evaluation of soil conditions and site features that is conducted and signed and sealed by a licensed soil scientist or for geologic or hydrogeologic conditions by a licensed geologist.
- (10) A plat, as defined in G.S. 130A-334(7a), or a site plan, as defined in G.S. 130A-334(13a).

(c) **Completeness Review for Notice of Intent to Construct.** – The local health department shall determine whether the notice of intent to construct required pursuant to subsection (b) of this section is complete within five business days after receiving the notice of intent to construct. A determination of completeness means that the notice of intent to construct includes all of the required components. If the local health department determines that the notice of intent to construct is incomplete, the local health department shall notify the owner and list the information needed to complete the notice. The owner may then submit additional information to the local health department to cure the deficiencies in the initial notice. The local health department shall make a final determination as to whether the notice of intent to construct is complete within five business days after the department receives the additional information. If the local health department fails to act within any time period set out in this subsection, the owner may treat the failure to act as a determination of completeness. The owner shall be able to apply for the building permit for the project upon the decision of completeness of the notice of intent by the local health department or if the local health department fails to act within the five business day time period.

(d) **Soil and Site Evaluation, Construction, and Activities.** –

- (1) The Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator shall use standards incorporated in recognized soil and siting practices in North Carolina. The evaluation and findings shall include, at a minimum, the information required in rules adopted by the Commission pursuant to G.S. 130A-335(e). An Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator shall not form a direct business relationship with any technology that may result in a conflict of interest.
- (2) The Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator shall prepare a signed and sealed statement of special inspections that includes the following items:
 - a. The materials, systems, components, and work subject to special inspections and testing.

- b. The type, frequency, and extent of each special inspection and each test. For the purposes of this subdivision, "special inspection" means any continuous or intermittent inspection or visitation performed by the Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator at the construction site on behalf of the owner.
 - (3) The Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator shall assist the owner in the selection of an on-site wastewater system contractor who shall be under contractual obligation to the owner of the system and have sufficient errors and omissions, liability, or other insurance for the system constructed.
 - (4) The Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator may assist in the construction, siting, relocation, or repair of any wastewater system described in G.S. 130A-343.
 - (5) Where the Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator's designs, plans, and specifications call for the installation of a conventional wastewater system, those designs, plans, and specifications shall allow for the installation of an Accepted system in lieu of a conventional system in accordance with the Accepted system approval.
- (e) Responsibilities of the On-Site Wastewater System Contractor. – The on-site wastewater system contractor retained by the site owner shall do all of the following:
- (1) Be certified pursuant to Article 5 of Chapter 90A of the General Statutes.
 - (2) Be responsible for all aspects of the construction and installation of the wastewater system and its components, including adherence to specifications and any special inspections that are prepared, signed, and sealed by the Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator.
 - (3) Submit a signed and dated statement of responsibility to the owner of the wastewater system, prior to commencement of work, that contains acknowledgement of the requirements of the on-site wastewater system specified by the Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator.
- (f) No Public Liability. – The Department, the Department's authorized agents, and local health departments shall have no liability for wastewater systems developed by the Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator; however, nothing in this section shall relieve the Department, the Department's authorized agents, and local health departments from any of their other obligations under State law or administrative rule.
- (g) Inspections, Construction Observations, and Reports. –
- (1) A local health department may, at any time, conduct a site visit of the wastewater system.
 - (2) An Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator shall make periodic visits to the site to observe the progress and quality of the construction.
 - (3) An Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator may employ independent inspectors to observe and direct the construction of the wastewater system. Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluators shall be liable for any errors or omissions made by independent inspectors they employ or contract with.
 - (4) All construction and inspection reports shall be signed by the authorized inspector or Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator. Copies shall be furnished to the owner and the certified contractor and shall be included in the submittal package to the local health department.

(h) Local Authority. – Nothing in this section shall relieve the owner of the wastewater system from complying with all rules adopted by a local health department pursuant to G.S. 130A-335(c) that are in effect at the time the owner submits the notice of intent to construct described in subsection (b) of this section. The local health department shall notify the owner of the wastewater system of any issues of compliance related to such modifications or additions.

(i) Operation and Management. –

(1) An Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator shall establish a written operation and management program based on the rules established for similar wastewater systems and shall provide this information to the owner of the system.

(2) If necessary to comply with rules adopted by the Commission, the owner shall enter into a contract with a water pollution control system operator certified pursuant to Part 1 of Article 3 of Chapter 90A of the General Statutes.

(3) The owner shall be responsible for the continued adherence to the operations and management program established by the Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(j) Post-Construction Conference. – The Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator shall hold a post-construction conference with the owner, the certified contractor, and the certified water pollution control system operator, if any. The post-construction conference shall include start-up and any required verification of system components.

(k) Required Documents. – At the post-construction conference, the Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator shall provide the owner with the following documents:

(1) A signed and sealed copy of reports on soil conditions and site features, layouts, drawings, specifications, justification on any proposed design daily flow reductions, and any special inspection reports or corrections made during the construction of the system.

(2) The owner's operation and management program established for the specific wastewater system under subdivision (1) of subsection (i) of this section.

(3) Any reports and findings related to the evaluation, siting, and construction of the wastewater system.

(l) After reviewing the Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator's report, the owner shall sign and notarize a document confirming acceptance and receipt of the report. The owner shall then submit the following to the local health department:

(1) A copy of the Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator's report.

(2) A copy of the operations and management program established for the system by the Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator.

(3) The fee established pursuant to subsection (n) of this section.

(4) A notarized letter that documents the owner's acceptance of the system.

(m) Authorization to Operate. – Within five business days of receipt of the required documents and fees described in subsection (l) of this section, the local health department shall issue the owner an authorization to operate confirming all the requirements of this section have been met and all rules adopted by the Commission pertaining to nonengineered on-site wastewater systems have been complied with.

(n) Fees. – The local health department may assess a fee for the system developed by the Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluator of up to thirty percent (30%) of the cumulative total of the fees established for similar systems permitted by the local health department. The fee shall

only be used by the local health department in support of its work pursuant to duties established by this section.

(o) Change in System Ownership. – A wastewater system authorized pursuant to this section shall not be affected by change of ownership of the site for the wastewater system, provided both the site for the wastewater system and the type of facility the system serves are unchanged.

(p) Remedies. – Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluators, certified contractors described in subsection (e) of this section, and certified water pollution control systems operators described in subdivision (2) of subsection (i) of this section shall be subject only to the disciplinary authority of their individual certifying boards.

(q) Rule Making. –

(1) The Commission shall have the power to adopt rules to implement the provisions of this section.

(2) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the North Carolina On-Site Wastewater Contractors and Inspectors Certification Board shall have the exclusive authority to promulgate rules regarding certification of Authorized On-Site Wastewater Evaluators where review and seal of a professional engineer is not necessary pursuant to this section.

(r) Reports. – The Department shall report to the Environmental Review Commission and the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services by January 1, 2020, and annually thereafter, on the program established under this section. The Department shall specifically include the efficiency and effectiveness of the program developed under this section and whether the program aided in reducing the length of time in issuing permits. The Department shall obtain activity reports from the local health departments showing the wastewater systems developed under this section. The annual report shall include any suggestions for the improvement of this section, including adequate and appropriate insurance coverage, operator reporting requirements, or fee allowance. (2019-151, s. 14; 2022-11, s. 5(d).)

§ 130A-337. Inspection; operation permit required.

(a) No system of wastewater collection, treatment and disposal shall be covered or placed into use by any person until an inspection by the local health department has determined that the system has been installed or repaired in accordance with any conditions of the improvement permit, the rules, and this Article.

(b) Upon determining that the system is properly installed or repaired and that the system is capable of being operated in accordance with the conditions of the improvement permit, the rules, this Article and any conditions to be imposed in the operation permit, as applicable, the local health department shall issue an operation permit authorizing the residence, place of business or place of public assembly to be occupied and for the system to be placed into use or reuse.

(c) Upon determination that an existing wastewater system has a valid operation permit and is operating properly in a manufactured home park, the local health department shall issue authorization in writing for a manufactured home to be connected to the existing system and to be occupied. Notwithstanding G.S. 130A-336, an improvement permit is not required for the connection of a manufactured home to an existing system with a valid operation permit in a manufactured home park.

(d) No person shall occupy a residence, place of business or place of public assembly, or place a wastewater system into use or reuse for a residence, place of business or place of public

assembly until an operation permit has been issued or authorization has been obtained pursuant to G.S. 130A-337(c). (1973, c. 452, s. 6; 1981, c. 949, s. 3; 1983, c. 891, s. 2; 1985, c. 487, s. 9; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 944, s. 6; 1995, c. 285, s. 1.)

§ 130A-338. Construction authorization required before other permits to be issued.

Where construction, location or relocation is proposed to be done upon a residence, place of business or place of public assembly, no permit required for electrical, plumbing, heating, air conditioning or other construction, location or relocation activity under any provision of general or special law shall be issued until a construction authorization has been issued under G.S. 130A-336, or authorization has been obtained under G.S. 130A-337(c), or a decision on the completeness of the notice of intent to construct is made by the local health department pursuant to G.S. 130A-336.1(c) or G.S. 130A-336.2(c). (1973, c. 452, s. 7; 1981, c. 949, s. 3; 1983, c. 891, s. 2; 1995, c. 285, s. 1; 2015-286, s. 4.14(d); 2022-11, s. 5(e).)

§ 130A-339. Limitation on electrical service.

No person shall allow permanent electrical service to a residence, place of business or place of public assembly upon construction, location or relocation until the official electrical inspector with jurisdiction as provided in G.S. 143-143.2 certifies to the electrical supplier that the required improvement permit, construction authorization, and an operation permit or authorization under G.S. 130A-337(c) or the letter of confirmation authorizing wastewater system operation under G.S. 130A-336.1(m) has been obtained. Temporary electrical service necessary for constructing a residence, place of business or place of public assembly can be provided upon compliance with G.S. 130A-338. (1973, c. 452, s. 8; 1981, c. 949, s. 3; 1983, c. 891, s. 2; 1995, c. 285, s. 1; 2015-286, s. 4.14(e); 2022-11, s. 5(f).)

§ 130A-340. Review procedures and appeals.

The Department, upon request by an applicant for an improvement permit, shall provide a technical review of any scientific data and system design submitted by the applicant. The data and system design shall be evaluated by professional peers of those who prepared the data and system design. The results of the technical review shall be available prior to a decision by the local health department and shall not affect an applicant's right to a contested hearing under Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. (1989, c. 764, s. 5.)

§ 130A-341. Consideration of a site with existing fill.

Upon application to the local health department, a site that has existing fill, including one on which fill material was placed prior to July 1, 1977, and that has sand or loamy sand for a depth of at least 36 inches below the existing ground surface, shall be evaluated for an on-site wastewater system. The Commission shall adopt rules to implement this section. (1989, c. 764, s. 8; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 944, s. 7.)

§ 130A-342. Residential wastewater treatment systems.

(a) Individual residential wastewater treatment systems that are approved and listed in accordance with the standards adopted by the National Sanitation Foundation, Inc. for Class I residential wastewater treatment systems, as set out in Standard 40 of the National Sanitation Foundation, Inc., (as approved 13 January 2001) as amended, shall be permitted under rules

adopted by the Commission. The Commission may establish standards in addition to those set by the National Sanitation Foundation, Inc.

(b) A permitted system with a design flow of less than 1,500 gallons per day shall be operated by a person who is a Subsurface Water Pollution Control System Operator as certified by the Water Pollution Control System Operators Certification Commission and authorized by the manufacturer of the individual residential wastewater treatment system. The Commission may, in addition to the requirement for a certified Subsurface Water Pollution Control System Operator, establish additional standards for wastewater systems with a design flow of 1,500 gallons or greater per day.

(c) Each county, in which one or more residential wastewater treatment systems permitted pursuant to this section are in use, shall document the performance of each system and report the results to the Department annually. (1989, c. 727, s. 223(b); c. 764, s. 9; 1989 (Reg. Sess., 1990), c. 1004, ss. 12, 37; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 944, s. 8; 1995, c. 285, s. 1; 1997-443, ss. 11A.84, 11A.119(a); 2001-505, s. 2.1; 2015-286, s. 4.14(j).)

§ 130A-343. Approval of on-site subsurface wastewater systems.

(a) Definitions. – As used in this section:

- (1) "Accepted wastewater dispersal system" means any subsurface wastewater dispersal system, other than a conventional wastewater system, that: (i) has been previously approved as an Innovative wastewater dispersal system or is a wastewater dispersal system specifically identified in a rule adopted by the Commission; (ii) has been in general use in this State as a wastewater dispersal system for more than five years; and (iii) has been approved by the Commission for general use or use in one or more specific applications. An Accepted wastewater dispersal system may be approved for use in applications for which a conventional wastewater system is unsuitable. The Commission may impose design, operation, maintenance, monitoring, and management requirements on the use of an Accepted wastewater dispersal system that it determines to be appropriate.
- (2) Recodified as subdivision (a)(7).
- (3) "Conventional wastewater system", "conventional sewage system", or "conventional septic tank system" means a subsurface wastewater system that consists of a traditional septic or settling tank and a gravity-fed subsurface dispersal field that uses washed natural stone or gravel of approved size and grade and piping to distribute effluent to soil in one or more nitrification trenches and that does not include any other appurtenance.
- (4) Repealed by Session Laws 2015-286, s. 4.15(a), effective October 22, 2015.
- (5) "Innovative wastewater system" means any wastewater system, other than a conventional wastewater system or a provisional wastewater system, or any technology, device, or component of a wastewater system that: (i) has been demonstrated to perform in a manner equal or superior to a conventional wastewater system; (ii) is constructed of materials whose physical and chemical properties provide the strength, durability, and chemical resistance to allow the system to withstand loads and conditions as required by rules adopted by the Commission; and (iii) has been approved by the Department for general use or for one or more specific applications. An innovative wastewater system may be

approved for use in applications for which a conventional wastewater system is unsuitable. The Department may impose any design, operation, maintenance, monitoring, and management requirements on the use of an innovative wastewater system that it determines to be appropriate. A wastewater system approved by a nationally recognized certification body and in compliance with the ongoing verification program of such body may submit a sampling protocol for innovative system approval that reduces the data sets required for such approval by fifty percent (50%). Such an application shall include all of the data associated with the nationally recognized certification body's verification of the system's performance.

- (6) "Nationally recognized certification body" means a third-party certification body for wastewater systems or system components that is accredited by an entity widely recognized in the United States such as the American National Standards Institute, the Standards Council of Canada, or the International Accreditation Service, Inc.
- (6a) "Prefabricated permeable block panel system" is a series of units for onsite wastewater dispersal manufactured of cementitious materials of coarse and fine lightweight expanded shale aggregate along with Portland cement, connected together by plastic pipe. The unit shall be of rigid design, constructed and installed to withstand load requirements without collapse, compression, or deflection.
- (7) "Provisional wastewater system" means any wastewater system or any technology, device, or component of a wastewater system that, on the basis of (i) research acceptable to the Department or (ii) approval of the wastewater system by a nationally recognized certification body for a period that exceeds one year for research, testing, or trial use under actual field conditions in this State pursuant to a protocol that has been approved by the Department.

(b) Adoption of Rules Governing Approvals. – The Commission shall adopt rules for the approval and permitting of innovative, conventional, provisional, and accepted wastewater systems. The rules shall address the criteria to be considered prior to issuing an approval for a system, requirements for preliminary design plans and specifications that must be submitted, methodology to be used, standards for monitoring and evaluating the system, research evaluation of the system, the plan of work for monitoring system performance and maintenance, and any additional matters the Commission determines are necessary for verification of the performance of a wastewater system or system component.

(c) Procedure for Modifications or Revocations. – The Department may modify, suspend, or revoke the approval of a wastewater system if the Department determines that the approval is based on false, incomplete, or misleading information or if the Department finds that modification, suspension, or revocation is necessary to protect public health, safety, or welfare. The Department shall provide a listing of all approved innovative, provisional, and accepted wastewater systems to the local health departments annually, and notify the local health departments within 30 days of any modification or revocation of an approval of a wastewater system or system component.

(d) Evaluation Protocols. – The Department shall approve one or more nationally recognized protocols for the evaluation of wastewater systems. Any protocol approved by the Department shall specify a minimum number of sites that must be evaluated and the duration of the evaluation period. At the request of a manufacturer of a wastewater system, the Department

may approve an alternative protocol for use in the evaluation of the performance of the manufacturer's wastewater system. A protocol for the evaluation of a wastewater system approved by the Department pursuant to this section is a scientific standard within the meaning of G.S. 150B-2(8a)h.

(e) Repealed by Session Laws 2015-286, s. 4.15(a), effective October 22, 2015.

(f) Provisional Systems. – A manufacturer of a wastewater system may apply to the Department to have the system provisionally approved for use in this State. Any wastewater system approved based on its approval by a nationally recognized certification body must be designed and installed in a manner consistent with the system evaluated and approved by the nationally recognized certification body. The manufacturer shall submit a proposal for evaluation of the system to the Department. The proposal shall contain procedures for obtaining specified information necessary to achieve innovative status upon completion of the provisional status. The proposal for evaluation shall include the design of the system, a description of any laboratory or field research or testing that will be used to evaluate the system, a description of the research or testing protocol, and the credentials of the independent laboratory, consultant, or other entity that will be conducting the research or testing on the system. The proposal may include an evaluation of research and testing conducted in other states to the extent that the research and testing involves soil types, climate, hydrology, and other relevant conditions that are comparable to conditions in this State and if the research or testing was conducted pursuant to a protocol acceptable to the Department. The manufacturer shall enter into a contract for an evaluation of the performance of the controlled demonstration wastewater system with an independent laboratory, consultant, or other entity that has expertise in the evaluation of wastewater systems and that is approved by the Department. The manufacturer may install up to 200 provisional wastewater systems on sites that are suitable for a conventional wastewater system and that have a repair area of sufficient size to allow installation of a conventional wastewater system, an approved innovative wastewater system, or an accepted wastewater system if the provisional wastewater system fails to perform properly. If the provisional wastewater system is intended for use on sites that are not suitable for a conventional wastewater system, the Department may approve the installation of the provisional wastewater system if the Department determines that the manufacturer can provide an acceptable alternative method for collection, treatment, and dispersal of the wastewater. The Department shall approve applications for provisional systems based on approval by a nationally recognized certification body within 90 days of receipt of a complete application. A manufacturer that chooses to remove its product from the nationally recognized standard during the provisional approval may continue its application in this State pursuant to requirements and procedures established by the Department.

(g) Innovative Systems. – A manufacturer of a wastewater system for on-site subsurface use may apply for and be considered for innovative system status by the Department in one of the following ways:

- (1) If the wastewater system has been approved as a provisional wastewater system pursuant to subsection (f) of this section, the manufacturer may apply to have the system approved as an innovative wastewater system based on successful completion of the evaluation protocols established pursuant to subsection (d) of this section.
- (2) If the wastewater system has not been evaluated or approved as a provisional wastewater system pursuant to subsection (f) of this section, the manufacturer may apply to the Department to have the system approved as an innovative

wastewater system on the basis of comparable research and testing conducted in other states. The manufacturer shall provide the Department with the data and findings of all evaluations of the performance of the system that have been conducted in any state by or on behalf of the manufacturer. The manufacturer shall also provide the Department with a summary of the data and findings of all other evaluations of the performance of the system that are known to the manufacturer.

- (3) If the wastewater system has not been evaluated or approved as a provisional system pursuant to subsection (f) of this section, but has been evaluated under protocol established by a nationally recognized certification body for at least two consecutive years, has been found to perform acceptably based on the criteria of the protocol, and is designed and will be installed in a manner consistent with the system evaluated and approved by the nationally recognized certification body, the manufacturer may apply to have the system approved as an innovative wastewater system.

Within 30 days of receipt of the initial application, the Department shall either (i) notify the manufacturer of any items necessary to complete the application or (ii) notify the manufacturer that its application is complete. The Department shall publish a notice that the manufacturer has submitted an application under this subsection in the North Carolina Register and may provide additional notice to the public via the Internet or by other means. The Department shall receive public comment on the application for at least 30 days after the date the notice is published in the North Carolina Register. In making a determination under this subsection, the Department shall consider the data, findings, and recommendations submitted by the manufacturer and all public comment. The Department may also consider any other information that the Department determines to be relevant. The Department shall determine: (i) whether the system performs in a manner equal or superior to a conventional wastewater system, in terms of structural integrity, treatment, and hydraulic performance; (ii) whether the system is constructed of materials whose physical and chemical properties provide the strength, durability, and chemical resistance to allow the system to withstand loads and conditions as required by rules adopted by the Commission; (iii) the circumstances in which use of the system is appropriate; and (iv) any conditions and limitations related to the use of the system. The Department shall make the determinations required by this subsection and approve or deny the application within 90 days after the Department receives a complete application from a manufacturer. If the Department fails to act on the application within 90 days of the notice of receipt of the complete application, the manufacturer may treat the application as denied and challenge the denial by filing a contested case as provided in Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. If the Department approves an innovative wastewater system, the Department shall notify the manufacturer of the approval and specify the circumstances in which use of the system is appropriate and any conditions and limitations related to the use of the system.

(g1) Approval of Functionally Equivalent Trench Systems as Innovative Systems. – A manufacturer of a wastewater trench system may petition the Commission to have the wastewater trench system approved as an innovative wastewater system as provided in this subsection.

- (1) The Commission shall approve a wastewater trench system as an innovative wastewater system if it finds that there is clear, convincing, and cogent evidence that the wastewater trench system is functionally equivalent to a wastewater trench system that is approved as an accepted wastewater system. A wastewater

trench system shall be considered functionally equivalent to an accepted wastewater trench system if the performance characteristics of the wastewater trench system satisfy all of the following requirements:

- a. The physical properties and chemical durability of the materials from which the wastewater trench system is constructed are equal to or superior to the physical properties and chemical durability of the materials from which the accepted wastewater trench system is constructed.
- b. The permeable sidewall area and bottom infiltrative area of the wastewater trench system are equal to or greater than the permeable sidewall area and bottom infiltrative area of the accepted wastewater trench system at a field-installed size.
- c. The wastewater trench system utilizes a similar method and manner of function for the conveyance and application of effluent as the accepted wastewater trench system.
- d. The structural integrity of the wastewater trench system is equal to or superior to the structural integrity of the accepted wastewater trench system.
- e. The wastewater trench system shall provide a field installed system storage volume equal to or greater than the field installed system storage volume of the accepted wastewater trench system.

(2) As part of its petition, the manufacturer shall provide to the Commission all of the following information:

- a. Specifications of the wastewater trench system.
- b. Data necessary to demonstrate that the wastewater trench system is functionally equivalent to a wastewater trench system that is approved as an accepted wastewater system.
- c. A certified statement from an independent, third-party professional engineer or testing laboratory that, based on verified documentation, the wastewater trench system is functionally equivalent to an accepted wastewater system.

(3) Approval of a wastewater trench system as an innovative wastewater system shall not be conditioned on the manufacturer of the wastewater trench system having operational systems installed in the State.

(4) The Commission shall authorize the use of a wastewater trench system as an innovative wastewater system in the same applications as the accepted wastewater trench system.

(5) The Commission shall not include conditions and limitations in the approval of a wastewater trench system as an innovative wastewater system that are not included in the approval of the accepted wastewater trench system.

(h) Accepted Wastewater Dispersal Systems. – A manufacturer of an Innovative wastewater dispersal system or other approved trench dispersal system specifically identified in a rule adopted by the Commission that has been in general use in this State for a minimum of five years may petition the Commission to have the system designated as an Accepted wastewater system as provided in this subsection. The manufacturer shall provide the Commission with the data and findings of all prior evaluations of the performance of the system in this State and other

states referenced in the petition, including disclosure of any conditions found to result in unacceptable structural integrity, treatment, or hydraulic performance. In addition, the manufacturer shall provide the Commission with information sufficient to enable the Commission to fully evaluate the performance of the system in this State for at least the five-year period immediately preceding the petition. The Commission shall designate a wastewater dispersal system as an Accepted wastewater system only if it finds that there is clear, convincing, and cogent evidence based on actual field surveys and county activity reports (i) to confirm the findings made by the Department at the time the Department approved the system as a wastewater dispersal system and (ii) that the system performs in a manner that is equal or superior to a conventional or Accepted wastewater system under actual field conditions in this State. The Commission shall specify the circumstances in which use of the system is appropriate and any conditions and limitations related to the use of the system.

(i) **Nonproprietary Wastewater Systems.** – The Department may initiate a review of a nonproprietary wastewater system and approve the system for use as a provisional wastewater system or an innovative wastewater system without having received an application from a manufacturer. The Department may recommend that the Commission designate a nonproprietary wastewater system as an accepted wastewater system without having received a petition from a manufacturer.

(j) Repealed by Session Laws 2015-286, s. 4.15(a), effective October 22, 2015.

(j1) **Clarification With Respect to Certain Dispersal Media.** – In considering the application by a manufacturer of a wastewater system utilizing expanded polystyrene synthetic aggregate particles as a septic effluent dispersal medium for approval of the system under this section, neither the Commission nor the Department may condition, delay, or deny the approval based on the particle or bulk density of the expanded polystyrene material. With respect to approvals already issued by the Department or Commission that include conditions or requirements related to the particle or bulk density of expanded polystyrene material, the Commission or Department, as applicable, shall promptly reissue all such approvals with the conditions and requirements relating to the density of expanded polystyrene material permanently deleted while leaving all other terms and conditions of the approval intact.

(k) **Fees.** – The Department shall collect the following fees under this section:

(1) Review of an alternative protocol under subsection (d) of this section	\$1,000.00
(2) Repealed by Session Laws 2015-286, s. 4.15(a), effective October 22, 2015.	
(3) Review of a provisional system	\$3,000.00
(4) Review of an innovative system	\$3,000.00
(5) Review of an accepted system	\$3,000.00
(6) Review of a residential wastewater treatment system pursuant to G.S. 130A-342	\$1,500.00
(7) Review of a component or device required of a system	\$ 100.00
(8) Modification to approved accepted, provisional, or innovative system	\$1,000.00

(l) **On-Site Wastewater System Account.** – The On-Site Wastewater System Account is established as a nonreverting account within the Department. Fees collected pursuant to this section shall be placed in the On-Site Wastewater System Account and shall be applied only to the costs of implementing this section. (1989, c. 764, s. 10; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 944, s. 9; 1995,

c. 285, s. 1; 2001-505, s. 2.2; 2011-261, s. 1; 2014-120, s. 28(a); 2015-286, s. 4.15(a); 2018-114, s. 12; 2019-151, s. 13; 2021-117, s. 12.1.)

§ 130A-343.1. Transfer of ownership of provisionally approved septic tanks and innovative septic tank systems to joint agency in certain counties; inspection fees in those counties.

(a) As used in this section, "provisionally approved septic tank or innovative septic tank system" means a septic tank system located in soil that is classified as provisionally suitable or an innovative septic tank system, as those terms are used in Subchapter 18A of Chapter 18 of Title 15A of the North Carolina Administrative Code, G.S. 130A-343, and any applicable local rules or ordinances.

(b) As used in this subsection, "unit of local government" has the same meaning as in G.S. 160A-460. One or more units of local government located in the Counties of Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Gates, Hertford, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrrell, and Washington may establish a joint agency for the purpose of owning and operating a provisionally approved septic tank or innovative septic tank system as provided in Article 20 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes. Bertie County may join any joint agency established under this subsection. The owner of any provisionally approved septic tank or innovative septic tank system may, upon acceptance by a joint agency established under this subsection, transfer ownership of any real or personal property or interest therein that is a part of or used in connection with the provisionally approved septic tank or innovative septic tank system to the joint agency. Notwithstanding G.S. 160A-462(a), a joint agency created pursuant to this subsection may hold real property necessary to the undertaking. Any county named in this subsection may accept real or personal property described in this subsection from the owner of the property for transfer to a joint agency established as provided in this subsection.

(c) The Counties of Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Gates, Hertford, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrrell, and Washington may adopt an ordinance providing that any fee for the inspection, maintenance, and repair of a provisionally approved septic tank or other innovative septic tank system may be billed as property taxes, may be payable in the same manner as property taxes, and in the case of nonpayment, may be collected in any manner by which property taxes can be collected. If the ordinance states that delinquent fees can be collected in the same manner as delinquent real property taxes, the delinquent fees are a lien on the real property described on the bill that includes the fee. (1999-288, ss. 1-3; 2001-78, ss. 1-3.)

§ 130A-344: Repealed by Session Laws 1995, c. 285, s. 2.

§ 130A-345. Disposal of liquid condensate from residential heating and cooling systems.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, every public or community wastewater system, as defined in G.S. 130A-334(8), shall provide for the collection of liquid condensate from residential heating and cooling systems by the public or community wastewater system. (2015-207, s. 6.)