

Article 4.

Sedimentation Pollution Control Act of 1973.

§ 113A-50. Short title.

This Article shall be known as and may be cited as the "Sedimentation Pollution Control Act of 1973." (1973, c. 392, s. 1.)

§ 113A-51. Preamble.

The sedimentation of streams, lakes and other waters of this State constitutes a major pollution problem. Sedimentation occurs from the erosion or depositing of soil and other materials into the waters, principally from construction sites and road maintenance. The continued development of this State will result in an intensification of pollution through sedimentation unless timely and appropriate action is taken. Control of erosion and sedimentation is deemed vital to the public interest and necessary to the public health and welfare, and expenditures of funds for erosion and sedimentation control programs shall be deemed for a public purpose. It is the purpose of this Article to provide for the creation, administration, and enforcement of a program and for the adoption of minimal mandatory standards which will permit development of this State to continue with the least detrimental effects from pollution by sedimentation. In recognition of the desirability of early coordination of sedimentation control planning, it is the intention of the General Assembly that preconstruction conferences be held among the affected parties, subject to the availability of staff. (1973, c. 392, s. 2; 1975, c. 647, s. 3.)

§ 113A-52. Definitions.

As used in this Article, unless the context otherwise requires:

- (1) Repealed by Session Laws 1973, c. 1417, s. 1.
- (1a) "Affiliate" has the same meaning as in 17 Code of Federal Regulations § 240.12(b)-2 (1 June 1993 Edition), which defines "affiliate" as a person that directly, or indirectly through one or more intermediaries, controls, is controlled by, or is under common control of another person.
- (2) "Commission" means the North Carolina Sedimentation Control Commission.
- (3) "Department" means the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality.
- (4) "District" means any Soil and Water Conservation District created pursuant to Chapter 139, North Carolina General Statutes.
- (5) "Erosion" means the wearing away of land surface by the action of wind, water, gravity, or any combination thereof.
- (6) "Land-disturbing activity" means any use of the land by any person in residential, industrial, educational, institutional or commercial development, highway and road construction and maintenance that results in a change in the natural cover or topography and that may cause or contribute to sedimentation.
- (7) "Local government" means any county, incorporated village, town, or city, or any combination of counties, incorporated villages, towns, and cities, acting through a joint program pursuant to the provisions of this Article.
- (7a) "Parent" has the same meaning as in 17 Code of Federal Regulations § 240.12(b)-2 (1 June 1993 Edition), which defines "parent" as an affiliate that

directly, or indirectly through one or more intermediaries, controls another person.

- (8) "Person" means any individual, partnership, firm, association, joint venture, public or private corporation, trust, estate, commission, board, public or private institution, utility, cooperative, interstate body, or other legal entity.
- (9) "Secretary" means the Secretary of Environmental Quality.
- (10) "Sediment" means solid particulate matter, both mineral and organic, that has been or is being transported by water, air, gravity, or ice from its site of origin.
- (10a) "Subsidiary" has the same meaning as in 17 Code of Federal Regulations § 240.12(b)-2 (1 June 1993 Edition), which defines "subsidiary" as an affiliate that is directly, or indirectly through one or more intermediaries, controlled by another person.
- (10b) "Tract" means all contiguous land and bodies of water being disturbed or to be disturbed as a unit, regardless of ownership.
- (11) "Working days" means days exclusive of Saturday and Sunday during which weather conditions or soil conditions permit land-disturbing activity to be undertaken. (1973, c. 392, s. 3; c. 1417, s. 1; 1975, c. 647, s. 1; 1977, c. 771, s. 4; 1989, c. 179, s. 1; c. 727, s. 218(60); 1989 (Reg. Sess., 1990), c. 1004, s. 19(b); 1991, c. 275, s. 1; 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 776, s. 1; 1997-443, s. 11A.119(a); 2015-241, s. 14.30(u), (v).)

§ 113A-52.01. Applicability of this Article.

This Article shall not apply to the following land-disturbing activities:

- (1) Activities, including the production and activities relating or incidental to the production of crops, grains, fruits, vegetables, ornamental and flowering plants, dairy, livestock, poultry, and all other forms of agriculture undertaken on agricultural land for the production of plants and animals useful to man, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Forages and sod crops, grains and feed crops, tobacco, cotton, and peanuts.
 - b. Dairy animals and dairy products.
 - c. Poultry and poultry products.
 - d. Livestock, including beef cattle, llamas, sheep, swine, horses, ponies, mules, and goats.
 - e. Bees and apiary products.
 - f. Fur producing animals.
 - g. Mulch, ornamental plants, and other horticultural products. For purposes of this section, "mulch" means substances composed primarily of plant remains or mixtures of such substances.
- (2) Activities undertaken on forestland for the production and harvesting of timber and timber products and conducted in accordance with standards defined by the Forest Practice Guidelines Related to Water Quality, as adopted by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
- (3) Activities for which a permit is required under the Mining Act of 1971, Article 7 of Chapter 74 of the General Statutes.

- (4) For the duration of an emergency, activities essential to protect human life, including activities specified in an executive order issued under G.S. 166A-19.30(a)(5).
- (5) Activities undertaken to restore the wetland functions of converted wetlands to provide compensatory mitigation to offset impacts permitted under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.
- (6) Activities undertaken pursuant to Natural Resources Conservation Service standards to restore the wetlands functions of converted wetlands as defined in Title 7 Code of Federal Regulations § 12.2 (January 1, 2014 Edition). (1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 776, s. 2; 1997-84, s. 1; 2014-100, s. 14.7(k); 2015-263, s. 19; 2016-113, s. 14; 2017-108, s. 6(a).)

§ 113A-52.1. Forest Practice Guidelines.

(a) The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services shall adopt Forest Practice Guidelines Related to Water Quality (best management practices). The adoption of Forest Practices Guidelines Related to Water Quality under this section is subject to the provisions of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes.

(b) If land-disturbing activity undertaken on forestland for the production and harvesting of timber and timber products is not conducted in accordance with Forest Practice Guidelines Related to Water Quality, the provisions of this Article shall apply to such activity and any related land-disturbing activity on the tract.

(c) The Commissioner shall establish and appoint a Forestry Technical Advisory Committee to assist in the development and periodic review of Forest Practice Guidelines Related to Water Quality. The Forestry Technical Advisory Committee shall consist of one member from the forest products industry, one member who is a consulting forester, one member who is a private landowner knowledgeable in forestry, one member from the United States Forest Service, one member from the academic community who is knowledgeable in forestry, one member employed by the Department of Environmental Quality who is knowledgeable in erosion and sedimentation control, one member who is knowledgeable in wildlife management, one member who is knowledgeable in marine fisheries management, one member who is knowledgeable in water quality, and one member from the conservation community. (1989, c. 179, s. 2; 2017-108, s. 6(b).)

§ 113A-53. Repealed by Session Laws 1973, c. 1262, s. 41.

§ 113A-54. Powers and duties of the Commission.

(a) The Commission shall, in cooperation with the Secretary of Transportation and other appropriate State and federal agencies, develop, promulgate, publicize, and administer a comprehensive State erosion and sedimentation control program.

(b) The Commission shall develop and adopt and shall revise as necessary from time to time, rules and regulations for the control of erosion and sedimentation resulting from

land-disturbing activities. The Commission shall adopt or revise its rules and regulations in accordance with Chapter 150B of the General Statutes.

(c) The rules and regulations adopted pursuant to G.S. 113A-54(b) for carrying out the erosion and sedimentation control program shall:

- (1) Be based upon relevant physical and developmental information concerning the watershed and drainage basins of the State, including, but not limited to, data relating to land use, soils, hydrology, geology, grading, ground cover, size of land area being disturbed, proximate water bodies and their characteristics, transportation, and public facilities and services;
- (2) Include such survey of lands and waters as may be deemed appropriate by the Commission or required by any applicable laws to identify those areas, including multijurisdictional and watershed areas, with critical erosion and sedimentation problems; and
- (3) Contain conservation standards for various types of soils and land uses, which standards shall include criteria and alternative techniques and methods for the control of erosion and sedimentation resulting from land-disturbing activities.

(d) In implementing the erosion and sedimentation control program, the Commission shall:

- (1) Assist and encourage local governments in developing erosion and sedimentation control programs and, as a part of this assistance, the Commission shall develop a model local erosion and sedimentation control ordinance. The Commission shall approve, approve as modified, or disapprove local programs submitted to it pursuant to G.S. 113A-60.
- (2) Assist and encourage other State agencies in developing erosion and sedimentation control programs to be administered in their jurisdictions. The Commission shall approve, approve as modified, or disapprove programs submitted pursuant to G.S. 113A-56 and from time to time shall review these programs for compliance with rules adopted by the Commission and for adequate enforcement.
- (3) Develop recommended methods of control of sedimentation and prepare and make available for distribution publications and other materials dealing with sedimentation control techniques appropriate for use by persons engaged in land-disturbing activities, general educational materials on erosion and sedimentation control, and instructional materials for persons involved in the enforcement of this Article and erosion and sedimentation control rules, ordinances, regulations, and plans.
- (4) Require submission of erosion and sedimentation control plans by those responsible for initiating land-disturbing activities for approval prior to commencement of the activities.

(e) To assist it in developing the erosion and sedimentation control program required by this Article, the Commission is authorized to appoint an advisory committee consisting of technical experts in the fields of water resources, soil science, engineering, and landscape architecture.

(f) Repealed by Session Laws 1987, c. 827, s. 10, effective August 13, 1987.

(g) The Commission is authorized to make the final decision on a request for the remission of a civil penalty under G.S. 113A-64.2. (1973, c. 392, s. 5; c. 1331, s. 3; c. 1417, s. 6; 1975, 2nd Sess., c. 983, s. 74; 1977, c. 464, s. 35; 1979, c. 922, s. 2; 1983 (Reg. Sess., 1984), c. 1014, ss. 1, 2; 1987, c. 827, s. 10; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1000, s. 3; 1989, c. 676, s. 1; 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 776, s. 3; 2002-165, ss. 2.2, 2.3; 2015-241, s. 14.26(a).)

§ 113A-54.1. Approval of erosion control plans.

(a) A draft erosion and sedimentation control plan must contain the applicant's address and, if the applicant is not a resident of North Carolina, designate a North Carolina agent for the purpose of receiving notice from the Commission or the Secretary of compliance or noncompliance with the plan, this Article, or any rules adopted pursuant to this Article. Except as provided in subsection (a1) of this section, if the applicant is not the owner of the land to be disturbed, the draft erosion and sedimentation control plan must include the owner's written consent for the applicant to submit a draft erosion and sedimentation control plan and to conduct the anticipated land-disturbing activity. The Commission shall approve, approve with modifications, or disapprove a draft erosion and sedimentation control plan for those land-disturbing activities for which prior plan approval is required within 30 days of receipt. The Commission shall condition approval of a draft erosion and sedimentation control plan upon the applicant's compliance with federal and State water quality laws, regulations, and rules. Failure to approve, approve with modifications, or disapprove a completed draft erosion and sedimentation control plan within 30 days of receipt shall be deemed approval of the plan. If the Commission disapproves a draft erosion and sedimentation control plan or a revised erosion and sedimentation control plan, it must state in writing the specific reasons that the plan was disapproved. Failure to approve, approve with modifications, or disapprove a revised erosion and sedimentation control plan within 15 days of receipt shall be deemed approval of the plan. The Commission may establish an expiration date for erosion and sedimentation control plans approved under this Article.

(a1) If the applicant is not the owner of the land to be disturbed and the anticipated land-disturbing activity involves the construction of utility lines for the provision of water, sewer, gas, telecommunications, or electrical service, the draft erosion and sedimentation control plan may be submitted without the written consent of the owner of the land, so long as the owner of the land has been provided prior notice of the project.

(b) If, following commencement of a land-disturbing activity pursuant to an approved erosion and sedimentation control plan, the Commission determines that the plan is inadequate to meet the requirements of this Article, the Commission may require any revision of the plan that is necessary to comply with this Article. Failure to approve, approve with modifications, or disapprove a revised erosion and sedimentation control plan within 15 days of receipt shall be deemed approval of the plan.

(c) The Commission shall disapprove an erosion and sedimentation control plan if implementation of the plan would result in a violation of rules adopted by the

Environmental Management Commission to protect riparian buffers along surface waters. The Director of the Division of Energy, Mineral, and Land Resources may disapprove an erosion and sedimentation control plan or disapprove a transfer of a plan under subsection (d1) of this section upon finding that an applicant or a parent, subsidiary, or other affiliate of the applicant:

- (1) Is conducting or has conducted land-disturbing activity without an approved plan, or has received notice of violation of a plan previously approved by the Commission or a local government pursuant to this Article and has not complied with the notice within the time specified in the notice;
- (2) Has failed to pay a civil penalty assessed pursuant to this Article or a local ordinance adopted pursuant to this Article by the time the payment is due;
- (3) Has been convicted of a misdemeanor pursuant to G.S. 113A-64(b) or any criminal provision of a local ordinance adopted pursuant to this Article; or
- (4) Has failed to substantially comply with State rules or local ordinances and regulations adopted pursuant to this Article.

(d) In the event that an erosion and sedimentation control plan or a transfer of a plan is disapproved by the Director pursuant to subsection (c) of this section, the Director shall state in writing the specific reasons that the plan was disapproved. The applicant or the proposed transferee may appeal the Director's disapproval of the plan to the Commission. For purposes of this subsection and subsection (c) of this section, an applicant's record or a proposed transferee's record may be considered for only the two years prior to the application date.

(d1) The Department may transfer an erosion and sedimentation control plan approved pursuant to this section without the consent of the plan holder to a successor-owner of the property on which the permitted activity is occurring or will occur as provided in this subsection:

- (1) The Department may transfer a plan if all of the following conditions are met:
 - a. The successor-owner of the property submits to the Department a written request for the transfer of the plan and an authorized statement of financial responsibility and ownership.
 - b. The Department finds all of the following:
 1. The plan holder is one of the following:
 - I. A natural person who is deceased.
 - II. A partnership, limited liability corporation, corporation, or any other business association that has been dissolved.
 - III. A person who has been lawfully and finally divested of title to the property on which the permitted activity is occurring or will occur.
 - IV. A person who has sold the property on which the permitted activity is occurring or will occur.
 2. The successor-owner holds title to the property on which the permitted activity is occurring or will occur.
 3. The successor-owner is the sole claimant of the right to engage in the permitted activity.
 4. There will be no substantial change in the permitted activity.

- (2) The plan holder shall comply with all terms and conditions of the plan until such time as the plan is transferred.
- (3) The successor-owner shall comply with all terms and conditions of the plan once the plan has been transferred.
- (4) Notwithstanding changes to law made after the original issuance of the plan, the Department may not impose new or different terms and conditions in the plan without the prior express consent of the successor-owner. Nothing in this subsection shall prevent the Commission from requiring a revised plan pursuant to G.S. 113A-54.1(b).

(e) The landowner, the financially responsible party, or the landowner's or the financially responsible party's agent shall perform an inspection of the area covered by the plan after each phase of the plan has been completed and after establishment of temporary ground cover in accordance with G.S. 113A-57(2). The person who performs the inspection shall maintain and make available a record of the inspection at the site of the land-disturbing activity. The record shall set out any significant deviation from the approved erosion control plan, identify any measures that may be required to correct the deviation, and document the completion of those measures. The record shall be maintained until permanent ground cover has been established as required by the approved erosion and sedimentation control plan. The inspections required by this subsection shall be in addition to inspections required by G.S. 113A-61.1. (1989, c. 676, s. 2; 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 776, s. 4; 1998-221, s. 1.11(a); 1999-379, s. 1; 2005-386, s. 7.1; 2006-250, s. 1; 2011-394, s. 3; 2012-143, s. 1(f); 2013-121, s. 3.)

§ 113A-54.2. Approval Fees.

(a) An application fee of sixty-five dollars (\$65.00) per acre of disturbed land shown on an erosion and sedimentation control plan or of land actually disturbed during the life of the project shall be charged for the review of an erosion and sedimentation control plan under this Article.

(b) The Sedimentation Account is established as a nonreverting account within the Department. Fees collected under this section shall be credited to the Account and shall be applied to the costs of administering this Article.

(c) Repealed by Session Laws 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 1039, s. 3.

(d) This section may not limit the existing authority of local programs approved pursuant to this Article to assess fees for the approval of erosion and sedimentation control plans. (1989 (Reg. Sess., 1990), c. 906, s. 1; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 1039, s. 3; 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 776, s. 5; 1999-379, s. 5; 2002-165, s. 2.4; 2007-323, s. 30.1(a).)

§ 113A-55. Authority of the Secretary.

The sedimentation control program developed by the Commission shall be administered by the Secretary under the direction of the Commission. To this end the Secretary shall employ the necessary clerical, technical, and administrative personnel, and assign tasks to the various divisions of the Department for the purpose of implementing this Article. The Secretary may bring enforcement actions pursuant to G.S. 113A-64 and G.S. 113A-65. The Secretary shall make final agency decisions in contested cases that arise from civil penalty assessments pursuant to G.S. 113A-64. (1973, c. 392, s. 6, c. 1417, s. 3; 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 776, s. 6.)

§ 113A-56. Jurisdiction of the Commission.

(a) The Commission shall have jurisdiction, to the exclusion of local governments, to adopt rules concerning land-disturbing activities that are:

- (1) Conducted by the State.
- (2) Conducted by the United States.
- (3) Conducted by persons having the power of eminent domain other than a local government.
- (4) Conducted by a local government.
- (5) Funded in whole or in part by the State or the United States.

(b) The Commission may delegate the jurisdiction conferred by G.S. 113A-56(a), in whole or in part, to any other State agency that has submitted an erosion and sedimentation control program to be administered by it, if the program has been approved by the Commission as being in conformity with the general State program.

(c) The Commission shall have concurrent jurisdiction with local governments that administer a delegated erosion and sedimentation control program over all other land-disturbing activities. In addition to the authority granted to the Commission in G.S. 113A-60(c), the Commission has the following authority with respect to a delegated erosion and sedimentation control program:

- (1) To review erosion and sedimentation control plan approvals made by a delegated erosion and sedimentation control program and to require a revised plan if the Commission determines that a plan does not comply with the requirements of this Article or the rules adopted pursuant to this Article.
- (2) To review the compliance activities of a delegated erosion and sedimentation control program and to take appropriate compliance action if the Commission determines that the local government has failed to take appropriate compliance action. (1973, c. 392, s. 7; c. 1417, s. 4; 1987, c. 827, s. 130; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1000, s. 4; 2002-165, s. 2.5; 2006-250, s. 2.)

§ 113A-57. Mandatory standards for land-disturbing activity.

No land-disturbing activity subject to this Article shall be undertaken except in accordance with the following mandatory requirements:

- (1) No land-disturbing activity during periods of construction or improvement to land shall be permitted in proximity to a lake or natural watercourse unless a buffer zone is provided along the margin of the watercourse of sufficient width to confine visible siltation within the twenty-five percent (25%) of the buffer zone nearest the land-disturbing activity. Waters that have been classified as trout waters by the Environmental Management Commission shall have an undisturbed buffer zone 25 feet wide or of sufficient width to confine visible siltation within the twenty-five percent (25%) of the buffer zone nearest the land-disturbing activity, whichever is greater. Provided, however, that the Sedimentation Control Commission may approve plans which include land-disturbing activity along trout waters when the duration of said disturbance would be temporary and the extent of said disturbance would be minimal. This subdivision shall not apply to a land-disturbing activity in connection with the

construction of facilities to be located on, over, or under a lake or natural watercourse.

- (2) The angle for graded slopes and fills shall be no greater than the angle that can be retained by vegetative cover or other adequate erosion-control devices or structures. In any event, slopes left exposed will, within 21 calendar days of completion of any phase of grading, be planted or otherwise provided with temporary or permanent ground cover, devices, or structures sufficient to restrain erosion.
- (3) Whenever land-disturbing activity that will disturb more than one acre is undertaken on a tract, the person conducting the land-disturbing activity shall install erosion and sedimentation control devices and practices that are sufficient to retain the sediment generated by the land-disturbing activity within the boundaries of the tract during construction upon and development of the tract, and shall plant or otherwise provide a permanent ground cover sufficient to restrain erosion after completion of construction or development within a time period to be specified by rule of the Commission.
- (4) No person shall initiate any land-disturbing activity that will disturb more than one acre on a tract unless, 30 or more days prior to initiating the activity, an erosion and sedimentation control plan for the activity is filed with the agency having jurisdiction and approved by the agency. An erosion and sedimentation control plan may be filed less than 30 days prior to initiation of a land-disturbing activity if the plan is submitted under an approved express permit program, and the land-disturbing activity may be initiated and conducted in accordance with the plan once the plan has been approved. The agency having jurisdiction shall forward to the Director of the Division of Water Resources a copy of each erosion and sedimentation control plan for a land-disturbing activity that involves the utilization of ditches for the purpose of de-watering or lowering the water table of the tract.
- (5) The land-disturbing activity shall be conducted in accordance with the approved erosion and sedimentation control plan. (1973, c. 392, s. 8; c. 1417, s. 5; 1975, c. 647, s. 2; 1979, c. 564; 1983 (Reg. Sess., 1984), c. 1014, s. 3; 1987, c. 827, s. 131; 1989, c. 676, s. 3; 1991, c. 275, s. 2; 1998-99, s. 1; 1999-379, s. 2; 2002-165, s. 2.6; 2005-386, s. 7.2; 2005-443, s. 2; 2006-255, s. 2; 2006-264, s. 53(a); 2013-413, s. 57(f).)

§ 113A-58. Enforcement authority of the Commission.

In implementing the provisions of this Article the Commission is authorized and directed to:

- (1) Inspect or cause to be inspected the sites of land-disturbing activities to determine whether applicable laws, regulations or erosion and sedimentation control plans are being complied with;
- (2) Make requests, or delegate to the Secretary authority to make requests, of the Attorney General or solicitors for prosecutions of violations of this Article. (1973, c. 392, s. 9; 2002-165, s. 2.7.)

§ 113A-59. Educational activities.

The Commission in conjunction with the soil and water conservation districts, the North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service, and other appropriate State and federal agencies shall conduct educational programs in erosion and sedimentation control, such programs to be directed towards State and local governmental officials, persons engaged in land-disturbing activities, and interested citizen groups. (1973, c. 392, s. 10.)

§ 113A-60. Local erosion and sedimentation control programs.

(a) A local government may submit to the Commission for its approval an erosion and sedimentation control program for its jurisdiction, and to this end local governments are authorized to adopt ordinances and regulations necessary to establish and enforce erosion and sedimentation control programs. An ordinance adopted by a local government may establish a fee for the review of an erosion and sedimentation control plan and related activities. Local governments are authorized to create or designate agencies or subdivisions of local government to administer and enforce the programs. An ordinance adopted by a local government shall at least meet and may exceed the minimum requirements of this Article and the rules adopted pursuant to this Article. Two or more units of local government are authorized to establish a joint program and to enter into any agreements that are necessary for the proper administration and enforcement of the program. The resolutions establishing any joint program must be duly recorded in the minutes of the governing body of each unit of local government participating in the program, and a certified copy of each resolution must be filed with the Commission.

(b) The Commission shall review each program submitted and within 90 days of receipt thereof shall notify the local government submitting the program that it has been approved, approved with modifications, or disapproved. The Commission shall only approve a program upon determining that its standards equal or exceed those of this Article and rules adopted pursuant to this Article.

(c) If the Commission determines that any local government is failing to administer or enforce an approved erosion and sedimentation control program, it shall notify the local government in writing and shall specify the deficiencies of administration and enforcement. If the local government has not taken corrective action within 30 days of receipt of notification from the Commission, the Commission shall assume administration and enforcement of the program until such time as the local government indicates its willingness and ability to resume administration and enforcement of the program.

(d) A local government may submit to the Commission for its approval a limited erosion and sedimentation control program for its jurisdiction that grants the local government the responsibility only for the assessment and collection of fees and for the inspection of land-disturbing activities within the jurisdiction of the local government. The Commission shall be responsible for the administration and enforcement of all other components of the erosion and sedimentation control program and the requirements of this Article. The local government may adopt ordinances and regulations necessary to establish a limited erosion and sedimentation control program. An ordinance adopted by a local government that establishes a limited program shall conform to the minimum requirements regarding the inspection of land-disturbing activities of this Article and the rules adopted pursuant to this Article regarding the inspection of land-disturbing activities. The local government shall establish and collect a fee to be paid by each person who submits an erosion and sedimentation control plan to the local government. The amount of the fee shall be an amount equal to eighty percent (80%) of the amount established by the Commission pursuant to G.S. 113A-54.2(a) plus any amount that the local government requires to cover the

cost of inspection and program administration activities by the local government. The total fee shall not exceed one hundred dollars (\$100.00) per acre. A local government that administers a limited erosion and sedimentation control program shall pay to the Commission the portion of the fee that equals eighty percent (80%) of the fee established pursuant to G.S. 113A-54.2(a) to cover the cost to the Commission for the administration and enforcement of other components of the erosion and sedimentation control program. Fees paid to the Commission by a local government shall be deposited in the Sedimentation Account established by G.S. 113A-54.2(b). A local government that administers a limited erosion and sedimentation control program and that receives an erosion control plan and fee under this subsection shall immediately transmit the plan to the Commission for review. A local government may create or designate agencies or subdivisions of the local government to administer the limited program. Two or more units of local government may establish a joint limited program and enter into any agreements necessary for the proper administration of the limited program. The resolutions establishing any joint limited program must be duly recorded in the minutes of the governing body of each unit of local government participating in the limited program, and a certified copy of each resolution must be filed with the Commission. Subsections (b) and (c) of this section apply to the approval and oversight of limited programs.

(e) Notwithstanding G.S. 113A-61.1, a local government with a limited erosion and sedimentation control program shall not issue a notice of violation if inspection indicates that the person engaged in land-disturbing activity has failed to comply with this Article, rules adopted pursuant to this Article, or an approved erosion and sedimentation control plan. The local government shall notify the Commission if any person has initiated land-disturbing activity for which an erosion and sedimentation control plan is required in the absence of an approved plan. If a local government with a limited program determines that a person engaged in a land-disturbing activity has failed to comply with an approved erosion and sedimentation control plan, the local government shall refer the matter to the Commission for inspection and enforcement pursuant to G.S. 113A-61.1. (1973, c. 392, s. 11; 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 776, s. 7; 2002-165, s. 2.8; 2006-250, s. 3.)

§ 113A-61. Local approval of erosion and sedimentation control plans.

(a) For those land-disturbing activities for which prior approval of an erosion and sedimentation control plan is required, the Commission may require that a local government that administers an erosion and sedimentation control program approved under G.S. 113A-60 require the applicant to submit a copy of the erosion and sedimentation control plan to the appropriate soil and water conservation district or districts at the same time the applicant submits the erosion and sedimentation control plan to the local government for approval. The soil and water conservation district or districts shall review the plan and submit any comments and recommendations to the local government within 20 days after the soil and water conservation district received the erosion and sedimentation control plan or within any shorter period of time as may be agreed upon by the soil and water conservation district and the local government. Failure of a soil and water conservation district to submit comments and recommendations within 20 days or within agreed upon shorter period of time shall not delay final action on the proposed plan by the local government.

(b) Local governments shall review each erosion and sedimentation control plan submitted to them and within 30 days of receipt thereof shall notify the person submitting the plan that it has been approved, approved with modifications, or disapproved. A local government shall only approve a plan upon determining that it complies with all applicable State and local regulations for erosion and sedimentation control.

(b1) A local government shall condition approval of a draft erosion and sedimentation control plan upon the applicant's compliance with federal and State water quality laws, regulations, and rules. A local government shall disapprove an erosion and sedimentation control plan if implementation of the plan would result in a violation of rules adopted by the Environmental Management Commission to protect riparian buffers along surface waters. A local government may disapprove an erosion and sedimentation control plan or disapprove a transfer of a plan under subsection (b3) of this section upon finding that an applicant or a parent, subsidiary, or other affiliate of the applicant:

- (1) Is conducting or has conducted land-disturbing activity without an approved plan, or has received notice of violation of a plan previously approved by the Commission or a local government pursuant to this Article and has not complied with the notice within the time specified in the notice.
- (2) Has failed to pay a civil penalty assessed pursuant to this Article or a local ordinance adopted pursuant to this Article by the time the payment is due.
- (3) Has been convicted of a misdemeanor pursuant to G.S. 113A-64(b) or any criminal provision of a local ordinance adopted pursuant to this Article.
- (4) Has failed to substantially comply with State rules or local ordinances and regulations adopted pursuant to this Article.

(b2) In the event that an erosion and sedimentation control plan or a transfer of a plan is disapproved by a local government pursuant to subsection (b1) of this section, the local government shall so notify the Director of the Division of Energy, Mineral, and Land Resources within 10 days of the disapproval. The local government shall advise the applicant or the proposed transferee and the Director in writing as to the specific reasons that the plan was disapproved. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (c) of this section, the applicant may appeal the local government's disapproval of the plan directly to the Commission. For purposes of this subsection and subsection (b1) of this section, an applicant's record or the proposed transferee's record may be considered for only the two years prior to the application date.

(b3) A local government administering an erosion and sedimentation control program may transfer an erosion and sedimentation control plan approved pursuant to this section without the consent of the plan holder to a successor-owner of the property on which the permitted activity is occurring or will occur as provided in this subsection:

- (1) The local government may transfer a plan if all of the following conditions are met:
 - a. The successor-owner of the property submits to the local government a written request for the transfer of the plan and an authorized statement of financial responsibility and ownership.
 - b. The local government finds all of the following:
 1. The plan holder is one of the following:

- I. A natural person who is deceased.
 - II. A partnership, limited liability corporation, corporation, or any other business association that has been dissolved.
 - III. A person who has been lawfully and finally divested of title to the property on which the permitted activity is occurring or will occur.
 - IV. A person who has sold the property on which the permitted activity is occurring or will occur.
2. The successor-owner holds title to the property on which the permitted activity is occurring or will occur.
 3. The successor-owner is the sole claimant of the right to engage in the permitted activity.
 4. There will be no substantial change in the permitted activity.
- (2) The plan holder shall comply with all terms and conditions of the plan until such time as the plan is transferred.
 - (3) The successor-owner shall comply with all terms and conditions of the plan once the plan has been transferred.
 - (4) Notwithstanding changes to law made after the original issuance of the plan, the local government may not impose new or different terms and conditions in the plan without the prior express consent of the successor-owner. Nothing in this subsection shall prevent the local government from requiring a revised plan pursuant to G.S. 113A-54.1(b).

(c) The disapproval or modification of any proposed erosion and sedimentation control plan by a local government shall entitle the person submitting the plan to a public hearing if the person submits written demand for a hearing within 15 days after receipt of written notice of the disapproval or modification. The hearings shall be conducted pursuant to procedures adopted by the local government. If the local government upholds the disapproval or modification of a proposed erosion and sedimentation control plan following the public hearing, the person submitting the erosion and sedimentation control plan is entitled to appeal the local government's action disapproving or modifying the plan to the Commission. The Commission, by regulation, shall direct the Secretary to appoint such employees of the Department as may be necessary to hear appeals from the disapproval or modification of erosion and sedimentation control plans by local governments. In addition to providing for the appeal of local government decisions disapproving or modifying erosion and sedimentation control plans to designated employees of the Department, the Commission shall designate an erosion and sedimentation control plan review committee consisting of three members of the Commission. The person submitting the erosion and sedimentation control plan may appeal the decision of an employee of the Department who has heard an appeal of a local government action disapproving or modifying an erosion and sedimentation control plan to the erosion and sedimentation control plan review committee of the Commission. Judicial review of the final action of the erosion and sedimentation control plan review committee of the Commission may be had in the superior court of the county in which the local government is situated.

(d) Repealed by Session Laws 1989, c. 676, s. 4. (1973, c. 392, s. 12; 1979, c. 922, s. 1; 1989, c. 676, s. 4; 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 776, ss. 8, 9; 1998-221, s. 1.11(b); 1999-379, s. 3; 2002-165, s. 2.9; 2012-143, s. 1(f); 2013-121, s. 4.)

§ 113A-61.1. Inspection of land-disturbing activity; notice of violation.

(a) The Commission, a local government that administers an erosion and sedimentation control program approved under G.S. 113A-60, or other approving authority shall provide for inspection of land-disturbing activities to ensure compliance with this Article and to determine whether the measures required in an erosion and sedimentation control plan are effective in controlling erosion and sedimentation resulting from the land-disturbing activity. Notice of this right of inspection shall be included in the certificate of approval of each erosion and sedimentation control plan. The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services may inspect land-disturbing activities undertaken on forestland for the production and harvesting of timber and timber products to determine compliance with the Forest Practice Guidelines Related to Water Quality adopted pursuant to G.S. 113A-52.1.

(b) No person shall willfully resist, delay, or obstruct an authorized representative of the Commission, an authorized representative of a local government, or an employee or an agent of the Department while the representative, employee, or agent is inspecting or attempting to inspect a land-disturbing activity under this section.

(b1) No person shall willfully resist, delay, or obstruct an authorized representative, employee, or agent of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services while the representative, employee, or agent is inspecting or attempting to inspect a land-disturbing activity undertaken on forestland for the production and harvesting of timber and timber products under this section.

(c) If the Secretary, a local government that administers an erosion and sedimentation control program approved under G.S. 113A-60, or other approving authority determines that the person engaged in the land-disturbing activity has failed to comply with this Article, the Secretary, local government, or other approving authority shall immediately serve a notice of violation upon that person. The notice may be served by any means authorized under G.S. 1A-1, Rule 4. A notice of violation shall specify a date by which the person must comply with this Article and inform the person of the actions that need to be taken to comply with this Article. Any person who fails to comply within the time specified is subject to additional civil and criminal penalties for a continuing violation as provided in G.S. 113A-64. If the person engaged in the land-disturbing activity has not received a previous notice of violation under this section, the Department, local government, or other approving authority shall deliver the notice of violation in person and shall offer assistance in developing corrective measures. Assistance may be provided by referral to a technical assistance program in the Department, referral to a cooperative extension program, or by the provision of written materials such as Department guidance documents. If the Department, local government, or other approving authority is unable to deliver the notice of violation in person within 15 days following discovery of the violation,

the notice of violation may be served in the manner prescribed for service of process by G.S. 1A-1, Rule 4, and shall include information on how to obtain assistance in developing corrective measures. (1989, c. 676, s. 5; 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 776, s. 10; 1999-379, s. 6; 2002-165, s. 2.10; 2015-241, s. 14.26(d); 2017-108, s. 6(c).)

§ 113A-62. Cooperation with the United States.

The Commission is authorized to cooperate and enter into agreements with any agency of the United States government in connection with plans for erosion and sedimentation control with respect to land-disturbing activities on lands that are under the jurisdiction of such agency. (1973, c. 392, s. 13; 2002-165, s. 2.11.)

§ 113A-63. Financial and other assistance.

The Commission and local governments are authorized to receive from federal, State, and other public and private sources financial, technical, and other assistance for use in accomplishing the purposes of this Article. (1973, c. 392, s. 14.)

§ 113A-64. Penalties.

(a) Civil Penalties. –

- (1) Any person who violates any of the provisions of this Article or any ordinance, rule, or order adopted or issued pursuant to this Article by the Commission or by a local government, or who initiates or continues a land-disturbing activity for which an erosion and sedimentation control plan is required except in accordance with the terms, conditions, and provisions of an approved plan, is subject to a civil penalty. The maximum civil penalty for a violation is five thousand dollars (\$5,000). A civil penalty may be assessed from the date of the violation. Each day of a continuing violation shall constitute a separate violation. When the person has not been assessed any civil penalty under this subsection for any previous violation and that person abated continuing environmental damage resulting from the violation within 180 days from the date of the notice of violation, the maximum cumulative total civil penalty assessed under this subsection for all violations associated with the land-disturbing activity for which the erosion and sedimentation control plan is required is twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000).
- (2) The Secretary or a local government that administers an erosion and sedimentation control program approved under G.S. 113A-60 shall determine the amount of the civil penalty and shall notify the person who is assessed the civil penalty of the amount of the penalty, the reason for assessing the penalty, the option available to that person to request a remission of the civil penalty under G.S. 113A-64.2, the date of the deadline for that person to make the remission request regarding this particular penalty, and, when that person has not been assessed any civil penalty under this section for any previous violation, the date of the deadline for that person to abate continuing environmental damage resulting from the violation in order to be subject to the maximum cumulative total civil penalty under subdivision (1) of this subsection. The

notice of assessment shall be served by any means authorized under G.S. 1A-1. A notice of assessment by the Secretary shall direct the violator to either pay the assessment or contest the assessment within 30 days by filing a petition for a contested case under Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. If a violator does not pay a civil penalty assessed by the Secretary within 30 days after it is due, the Department shall request the Attorney General to institute a civil action to recover the amount of the assessment. A notice of assessment by a local government shall direct the violator to either pay the assessment or contest the assessment within 30 days by filing a petition for hearing with the local government as directed by procedures within the local ordinances or regulations adopted to establish and enforce the erosion and sedimentation control program. If a violator does not pay a civil penalty assessed by a local government within 30 days after it is due, the local government may institute a civil action to recover the amount of the assessment. The civil action may be brought in the superior court of any county where the violation occurred or the violator's residence or principal place of business is located. A civil action must be filed within three years of the date the assessment was due. An assessment that is not contested is due when the violator is served with a notice of assessment. An assessment that is contested is due at the conclusion of the administrative and judicial review of the assessment.

- (3) In determining the amount of the penalty, the Secretary or a local government shall consider the degree and extent of harm caused by the violation, the cost of rectifying the damage, the amount of money the violator saved by noncompliance, whether the violation was committed willfully and the prior record of the violator in complying or failing to comply with this Article, or any ordinance, rule, or order adopted or issued pursuant to this Article by the Commission or by a local government.
- (4) Repealed by Session Laws 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 776, s. 11.
- (5) The clear proceeds of civil penalties collected by the Department or other State agency or a local government under this subsection shall be remitted to the Civil Penalty and Forfeiture Fund in accordance with G.S. 115C-457.2.

(b) **Criminal Penalties.** – Any person who knowingly or willfully violates any provision of this Article or any ordinance, rule, regulation, or order duly adopted or issued by the Commission or a local government, or who knowingly or willfully initiates or continues a land-disturbing activity for which an erosion and sedimentation control plan is required, except in accordance with the terms, conditions, and provisions of an approved plan, shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor that may include a fine not to exceed five thousand dollars (\$5,000). (1973, c. 392, s. 15; 1977, c. 852; 1987, c. 246, s. 3; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1000, s. 5; 1989, c. 676, s. 6; 1991, c. 412, s. 2; c. 725, s. 5; 1993, c. 539, s. 873; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 776, s. 11; 1998-215, s. 52; 1999-379, s. 4; 2002-165, s. 2.12; 2013-413, s. 33; 2015-241, s. 14.26(b).)

§ 113A-64.1. Restoration of areas affected by failure to comply.

The Secretary or a local government that administers a local erosion and sedimentation control program approved under G.S. 113A-60 may require a person who engaged in a land-disturbing

activity and failed to retain sediment generated by the activity, as required by G.S. 113A-57(3), to restore the waters and land affected by the failure so as to minimize the detrimental effects of the resulting pollution by sedimentation. This authority is in addition to any other civil or criminal penalty or injunctive relief authorized under this Article. (1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 776, s. 12; 2002-165, s. 2.13.)

§ 113A-64.2. Remission of civil penalties.

(a) A request for remission of a civil penalty imposed under G.S. 113A-64 may be filed with the Commission within 60 days of receipt of the notice of assessment. A remission request must be accompanied by a waiver of the right to a contested case hearing pursuant to Chapter 150B of the General Statutes and a stipulation of the facts on which the assessment was based.

(b) The following factors shall be considered in determining whether a civil penalty remission request will be approved:

- (1) Whether one or more of the civil penalty assessment factors in G.S. 113A-64(a)(3) were wrongly applied to the detriment of the petitioner.
- (2) Whether the petitioner promptly abated continuing environmental damage resulting from the violation.
- (3) Whether the violation was inadvertent or a result of an accident.
- (4) Whether the petitioner had been assessed civil penalties for any previous violations.
- (5) Whether payment of the civil penalty will prevent payment for necessary remedial actions or would otherwise create a significant financial hardship.
- (6) The assessed property tax valuation of the petitioner's property upon which the violation occurred, excluding the value of any structures located on the property.

(c) The petitioner has the burden of providing information concerning the financial impact of a civil penalty on the petitioner and the burden of showing the petitioner's financial hardship.

(d) The Commission may remit the entire amount of the penalty only when the petitioner has not been assessed civil penalties for previous violations and payment of the civil penalty will prevent payment for necessary remedial actions.

(e) The Commission may not impose a penalty under this section that is in excess of the civil penalty imposed by the Department. (2015-241, s. 14.26(c).)

§ 113A-65. Injunctive relief.

(a) Violation of State Program. – Whenever the Secretary has reasonable cause to believe that any person is violating or is threatening to violate the requirements of this Article he may, either before or after the institution of any other action or proceeding authorized by this Article, institute a civil action for injunctive relief to restrain the violation or threatened violation. The action shall be brought in the superior court of the county in which the violation or threatened violation is occurring or about to occur, and shall be in the name of the State upon the relation of the Secretary.

(b) Violation of Local Program. – Whenever the governing body of a local government having jurisdiction has reasonable cause to believe that any person is violating or is threatening to violate any ordinance, rule, regulation, or order adopted or issued by the local government pursuant to this Article, or any term, condition or provision of an erosion and sedimentation control plan over which it has jurisdiction, may, either before or after the institution of any other action or proceeding authorized by this Article, institute a civil action in the name of the local government for injunctive relief to restrain the violation or threatened violation. The action shall be brought in the superior court of the county in which the violation is occurring or is threatened.

(c) Abatement, etc., of Violation. – Upon determination by a court that an alleged violation is occurring or is threatened, the court shall enter any order or judgment that is necessary to abate the violation, to ensure that restoration is performed, or to prevent the threatened violation. The institution of an action for injunctive relief under subsections (a) or (b) of this section shall not relieve any party to the proceeding from any civil or criminal penalty prescribed for violations of this Article. (1973, c. 392, s. 16; 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 776, s. 13; 2002-165, s. 2.14.)

§ 113A-65.1. Stop-work orders.

(a) The Secretary may issue a stop-work order if he finds that a land-disturbing activity is being conducted in violation of this Article or of any rule adopted or order issued pursuant to this Article, that the violation is knowing and willful, and that either:

- (1) Off-site sedimentation has eliminated or severely degraded a use in a lake or natural watercourse or that such degradation is imminent.
- (2) Off-site sedimentation has caused severe damage to adjacent land or that such damage is imminent.
- (3) The land-disturbing activity is being conducted without an approved plan.

(b) The stop-work order shall be in writing and shall state what work is to be stopped and what measures are required to abate the violation. The order shall include a statement of the findings made by the Secretary pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, and shall list the conditions under which work that has been stopped by the order may be resumed. The delivery of equipment and materials which does not contribute to the violation may continue while the stop-work order is in effect. A copy of this section shall be attached to the order.

(c) The stop-work order shall be served by the sheriff of the county in which the land-disturbing activity is being conducted or by some other person duly authorized by law to serve process as provided by G.S. 1A-1, Rule 4, and shall be served on the person at the site of the land-disturbing activity who is in operational control of the land-disturbing activity. The sheriff or other person duly authorized by law to serve process shall post a copy of the stop-work order in a conspicuous place at the site of the land-disturbing activity. The Department shall also deliver a copy of the stop-work order to any person that the Department has reason to believe may be responsible for the violation.

(d) The directives of a stop-work order become effective upon service of the order. Thereafter, any person notified of the stop-work order who violates any of the directives set out in the order may be assessed a civil penalty as provided in G.S. 113A-64(a). A stop-work order issued pursuant to this section may be issued for a period not to exceed five days.

(e) The Secretary shall designate an employee of the Department to monitor compliance with the stop-work order. The name of the employee so designated shall be included in the stop-work order. The employee so designated, or the Secretary, shall rescind the stop-work order if all the violations for which the stop-work order are issued are corrected, no other violations have occurred, and all measures necessary to abate the violations have been taken. The Secretary shall rescind a stop-work order that is issued in error.

(f) The issuance of a stop-work order shall be a final agency decision subject to judicial review in the same manner as an order in a contested case pursuant to Article 4 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. The petition for judicial review shall be filed in the superior court of the county in which the land-disturbing activity is being conducted.

(g) As used in this section, days are computed as provided in G.S. 1A-1, Rule 6. Except as otherwise provided, the Secretary may delegate any power or duty under this section to the Director of the Division of Energy, Mineral, and Land Resources of the Department or to any person who has supervisory authority over the Director. The Director may delegate any power or duty so delegated only to a person who is designated as acting Director.

(h) The Attorney General shall file a cause of action to abate the violations which resulted in the issuance of a stop-work order within two business days of the service of the stop-work order. The cause of action shall include a motion for an ex parte temporary restraining order to abate the violation and to effect necessary remedial measures. The resident superior court judge, or any judge assigned to hear the motion for the temporary restraining order, shall hear and determine the motion within two days of the filing of the complaint. The clerk of superior court shall accept complaints filed pursuant to this section without the payment of filing fees. Filing fees shall be paid to the clerk of superior court within 30 days of the filing of the complaint. (1991, c. 412, s. 1; 1998-99, s. 2; 2005-386, s. 7.3; 2012-143, s. 1(f).)

§ 113A-66. Civil relief.

(a) Any person injured by a violation of this Article or any ordinance, rule, or order duly adopted by the Secretary or a local government, or by the initiation or continuation of a land-disturbing activity for which an erosion and sedimentation control plan is required other than in accordance with the terms, conditions, and provisions of an approved plan, may bring a civil action against the person alleged to be in violation (including the State and any local government). The action may seek any of the following:

- (1) Injunctive relief.
- (2) An order enforcing the law, rule, ordinance, order, or erosion and sedimentation control plan violated.
- (3) Damages caused by the violation.
- (4) Repealed by Session Laws 2002-165, s. 2.15, effective October 23, 2002.

If the amount of actual damages as found by the court or jury in suits brought under this subsection is five thousand dollars (\$5,000) or less, the plaintiff shall be awarded costs of litigation including reasonable attorneys fees and expert witness fees.

(b) Civil actions under this section shall be brought in the superior court of the county in which the alleged violations occurred.

(c) The court, in issuing any final order in any action brought pursuant to this section may award costs of litigation (including reasonable attorney and expert-witness fees) to any party, whenever it determines that such an award is appropriate. The court may, if a temporary restraining order or preliminary injunction is sought, require, the filing of a bond or equivalent security, the amount of such bond or security to be determined by the court.

(d) Nothing in this section shall restrict any right which any person (or class of persons) may have under any statute or common law to seek injunctive or other relief. (1973, c. 392, s. 17; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1000, s. 6; 2002-165, s. 2.15.)

§ 113A-67. Annual Report.

The Department shall report to the Environmental Review Commission on the implementation of this Article on or before October 1 of each year. The Department shall include in the report an analysis of how the implementation of the Sedimentation Pollution Control Act of 1973 is affecting activities that contribute to the sedimentation of streams, rivers, lakes, and other waters of the State. The report shall also include a review of the effectiveness of local erosion and sedimentation control programs. The report shall be submitted to the Environmental Review Commission with the report required by G.S. 143-214.7(e) as a single report. (2004-195, s. 2.1; 2017-10, s. 4.15(a).)

§ 113A-68: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 113A-69: Reserved for future codification purposes.