**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 49-11-120(4) OF THE 1976 CODE, RELATING TO THE DEFINITION OF “DAM,” TO INCLUDE THE ERECTION OF AN ARTIFICIAL BARRIER FOR THE PURPOSE OF CREATING A RESERVOIR, TO CLARIFY THAT FAILURE OF A DAM MUST CAUSE DANGER TO HUMAN LIFE OR THE PROPERTY OF OTHERS, AND TO ADD NEW EXCEPTIONS TO THE DEFINITION; TO AMEND ARTICLE 3, CHAPTER 11, TITLE 49 OF THE 1976 CODE, RELATING TO THE DAMS AND RESERVOIRS SAFETY ACT, TO PROVIDE THAT OWNERS OF EXISTING DAMS OR PROPERTY OWNERS INTENDING TO CONSTRUCT OR ENLARGE A DAM MAY RECEIVE FROM THE DEPARTMENT A DETERMINATION CONCERNING WHETHER THE DAM IS SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF ARTICLE 3; TO AMEND SECTION 49-11-150 OF THE 1976 CODE, RELATING TO AN OWNER’S RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SAFE MAINTENANCE OF A DAM OR RESERVOIR, TO PROVIDE THAT THE OWNER OF A DAM OR RESERVOIR MUST PROVIDE CONTACT INFORMATION AND A COMPLETED DAM OWNER CHECKLIST TO THE DEPARTMENT ON A CERTAIN SCHEDULE, TO PROVIDE FOR A CURRENT EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN, AND TO PROVIDE FOR NOTICE OF POTENTIAL OR ACTUAL FAILURES; TO AMEND SECTION 49-11-160 OF THE 1976 CODE, RELATING TO ORDERS TO MAINTAIN, ALTER, REPAIR, OR REMOVE A DAM OR RESERVOIR, TO CHANGE THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH THE DEPARTMENT MAY ISSUE AN ORDER DIRECTING THE OWNER OF A DAM OR RESERVOIR TO UNDERTAKE NECESSARY MAINTENANCE, ALTERATIONS, REPAIRS, OR REMOVAL; TO AMEND SECTION 49-11-170 OF THE 1976 CODE, RELATING TO BRINGING UNSAFE DAMS TO THE ATTENTION OF THE DEPARTMENT, TO PROVIDE THAT THE DEPARTMENT CANNOT REQUIRE CHANGES TO A DAM OR RESERVOIR DUE TO RECLASSIFICATION UNLESS NECESSARY TO PREVENT THE LOSS OF HUMAN LIFE; TO AMEND SECTION 49-11-200 OF THE 1976 CODE, RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT APPROVAL REQUIRED FOR CONSTRUCTION OR ALTERATION, TO PROVIDE THAT CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW DAM OR RESERVOIR OR THE ENLARGEMENT, REMOVAL, OR REPAIR OF AN EXISTING DAM OR RESERVOIR MAY NOT BEGIN UNLESS APPROVED BY THE DEPARTMENT AND TO PROVIDE FOR EXCEPTIONS; AND TO AMEND SECTION 12-6-3370 OF THE 1976 CODE, RELATING TO TAX CREDITS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION, INSTALLATION, OR RESTORATION OF WATER IMPOUNDMENTS AND WATER CONTROL STRUCTURES, TO PROVIDE THAT A TAXPAYER MAY CLAIM A CREDIT OF UP TO FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR REPAIRS REQUIRED AS A RESULT OF THE DEPARTMENT RECLASSIFYING THE DAM.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Section 49-11-120(4) of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“(4) ‘Dam’ means an artificial barrier with appurtenant works, including, but not limited to, dams, levees, dikes, or floodwalls, for the impoundment or diversion of waters or other fluids or for the creation of a reservoir, where failure ~~may~~ is likely to cause danger to human life or the property of others. However, this does not include a dam:

(a) less than twenty‑five feet in height from the natural bed of the stream or watercourse measured at the downstream toe of the dam, or less than twenty‑five feet from the lowest elevation of the outside limit of the dam, if it is not across a stream channel or watercourse, to the maximum water storage elevation and has an impounding capacity at maximum water storage elevation of less than fifty‑acre feet unless a situation exists where the hazard potential as determined by the department is such that dam failure or improper reservoir operation ~~may~~ is likely to cause loss of human life;

(b) owned or operated by a department or an agency of the federal government;

(c) owned or licensed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the South Carolina Public Service Authority, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the United States Corps of Engineers, or other responsible federal licensing agencies considered appropriate by the department;

(d) upon which the Department of Transportation or county or municipal governments have accepted maintenance responsibility for a road or highway where that road or highway is the only danger to life or property with respect to failure of the dam;

(e) greater in size than a dam subject to subitem (a) for which failure is not likely to cause danger to human life and may cause only minimal damage to the property of others; or

(f) solely used for irrigation related to the production of food, fiber, or other agricultural products, unless dam failure or improper reservoir operation is likely to cause danger to human life.”

SECTION 2. Article 3, Chapter 11, Title 49 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 49-11-125. (A) An owner of a dam or reservoir constructed in this State may submit the dam’s location, size, purpose, and impoundment capacity to the department for a determination concerning whether the dam is excluded from the provisions of this article pursuant to Section 49-11-120(4)(a) through (f).

(B) A property owner intending to construct or enlarge a dam or reservoir on his property may submit the proposed location, size, purpose, and impoundment capacity to the department for a determination concerning whether the dam is excluded from the provisions of this article pursuant to Section 49-11-120(4)(a) through (f).”

SECTION 3. Section 49-11-150 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 49-11-150. (A)(1) The owner of a dam or reservoir constructed in this State solely is responsible for maintaining the dam or reservoir in a safe condition throughout the life of the structure.

(2) The owner of a dam or reservoir constructed in this State must provide the department with his name; home or business address; phone number; email address, if any; and a completed dam owner checklist on a form provided by the department. Any changes in a dam owner’s contact information must be reported to the department within thirty days of the change.

(a) The owner of a dam or reservoir classified as a high hazard dam under existing regulations shall provide to the department a completed dam owner checklist annually no later than July first.

(b) The owner of a dam or reservoir classified as a significant hazard dam under existing regulations shall provide to the department a completed dam owner checklist every five years on a schedule determined by the department.

(3) The department may waive the dam owner checklist filing requirements if the department determines that the requirements impose a significant financial hardship on the owner. A request for a waiver must be submitted by the owner and may not be initiated by the department.

(B) The owner of a dam or reservoir shall inform the department in writing within thirty days after title to the dam or reservoir legally has been transferred from his ownership. The notice must include the name, ~~and~~ home or business address, phone number, and email address, if any, of the new owner.

(C) The owner of a dam or reservoir ~~whose failure likely would cause loss of life or substantial property damage, a dam or reservoir~~ classified as a high or significant hazard under existing regulations~~,~~ shall provide to the department a current emergency action plan in the format on the schedule the department by regulation requires, including updated contact information for county or local emergency management officials. However, nothing in the emergency action plan, nor any provision of the law to the contrary, shall require or impose a responsibility on the owner to identify or notify any downstream residents or business owners located in the inundation zone for that dam or reservoir if the owner has reason to believe that the dam or reservoir is near failure or has failed. The owner must notify county or local emergency management officials and the department’s Dams and Reservoirs Safety program that the owner has reason to believe that the dam or reservoir is near failure or has failed.”

SECTION 4. Section 49-11-160 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 49-11-160. The department may issue an order directing the owner of a dam or reservoir subject to the provisions of this article to make at his expense the necessary maintenance, alteration, repair, or removal upon a finding that the dam or reservoir:

(a) is or has become unsafe and is dangerous to human life or the property of others; and

(b)(1) is not maintained in good repair or operating condition; or

~~(c)~~(2) is not maintained or operated in accordance with the terms and conditions of the certificate of completion and operation issued by the department.”

SECTION 5. Section 49-11-170 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 49-11-170. (A) The existence of a dam ~~which~~ that is not maintained in good repair or operating condition or ~~may be unsafe and a~~ that is likely to cause danger to human life or the property of others may be brought to the attention of the department by complaint, staff, or authorized investigation or by other means.

(B) Upon staff or other authorized investigations or upon receipt of a written private complaint alleging that the person or property of the complainant is endangered by the construction, maintenance, operation, or condition of a dam or reservoir, the department shall cause a preliminary inspection of the structure and downstream development to be made by field observations to determine if the complaint is meritorious. The department may require the owner of the dam or reservoir to provide data, records, and design plans of the structure specified by regulations.

(C) If upon the preliminary inspection it is determined that the dam or reservoir is unsafe and is likely to cause danger ~~dangerous~~ to human life or the property of others, then the department may order the owner at his expense to make a detailed inspection of the dam and reservoir and surrounding area and to provide to the department within a time frame specified by the department plans prepared by a qualified registered professional engineer for correction of all deficiencies of the dam or to provide to the department plans and specifications for removal of the dam. In either instance the plans must be approved by the department before implementation and implemented within a time frame specified by the department. If upon inspection it is determined that the dam or reservoir has not been maintained in good repair or operating condition, then the department may order the owner at his expense to accomplish the necessary maintenance or to obtain a permit for removal and to remove the dam within a time frame specified by the department.

(D) The department shall give the owner notice of its action when:

(1) a complaint has been filed alleging that the owners’ dam or reservoir is unsafe and is likely to cause ~~a~~ danger to human life or the property of others, stating the nature of the complaint;

(2) a preliminary inspection has been made with findings.

(E) The owner of a dam or reservoir determined through a preliminary inspection not to be maintained in good repair or operating condition or to be unsafe and a danger to human life or the property of others may request a hearing before the board of the department within thirty days after notice of the findings are delivered. The owner may submit written or present oral evidence which must be considered by the board of the department in the issuance of the order.

(F) The department shall not require any changes to the dam or reservoir due to reclassification unless failure to do so would likely cause loss of human life.”

SECTION 6. Section 49-11-200 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 49-11-200. (A) The construction of a new dam or reservoir, or the enlargement, removal, or repair of an existing dam or reservoir may not begin until the owner has applied for and obtained from the department written approval of plans and specifications.

(B)(1) ~~Where~~ If the location and size of ~~the~~ a proposed dam or reservoir ~~renders~~ will pose no significant danger to human life or the property of others in instances including, but not limited to, dams and reservoirs for agricultural, fish or wildlife, or recreational uses on private lands, then the requirements of subsection (A), ~~and~~ Section 49‑11‑210, and Section 49-11-220 do not apply ~~unnecessary, the department may grant approval and waive certain nonessential requirements in instances, including, but not limited to, small dams and reservoirs for agricultural, fish or wildlife, or recreational uses on private lands and of no danger to other life or property downstream~~.

(2) If the enlargement, removal, or repair of an existing dam or reservoir will not cause the dam to pose danger to human life or the property of others, then the requirements of subsection (A), Section 49-11-210, and Section 49-11-220 do not apply.”

SECTION 7. Section 12-6-3370 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 12-6-3370. (A)(1) A taxpayer may claim a credit for twenty‑five percent of all expenditures for the construction, installation, or restoration of ponds, lakes, other water impoundments, and water control structures designed for the purposes of water storage for irrigation, water supply, sediment control, erosion control or aquaculture and wildlife management, providing these items are not located in or adjacent to and filled primarily by coastal waters of the State.

(2) A taxpayer may claim a refundable credit for repairs or enhancements that are required by the Department of Health and Environmental Control for a dam, as defined by Section 49-11-120(4), or a reservoir, as defined by Section 49-11-120(11), owned by the taxpayer due to the dam’s or reservoir’s reclassification.

(B) In the case of pass‑through entities, the credit is determined at the entity level and is limited to two thousand five hundred dollars. The maximum amount of credit for all taxpayers, including any credit passed through to the taxpayer from a partnership, ‘S’ Corporation, estate, or trust, is also limited to two thousand five hundred dollars unless the credit is being claimed pursuant to subsection (A)(2), in which case the credit is equal to the actual cost of the repairs or enhancements, not to exceed fifty thousand dollars.

(C) If the credit exceeds the taxpayer’s tax liability for the taxable year, the excess amount may be carried forward for credit against income taxes in the next five succeeding taxable years. A tax credit claimed pursuant to subsection (A)(2) is not eligible to be carried forward pursuant to this subsection.

(D) To qualify for the credit the taxpayer must obtain a construction permit issued by the Department of Health and Environmental Control or proof of exemption from permit requirements issued by the department, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, or a local Soil and Water Conservation District.”

SECTION 8. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

‑‑‑‑XX‑‑‑‑