



Buffer and Soil Loss Statutes, as amended in 2017 by Laws of Minnesota 2017, Chapter 93 (S.F. 844)

May 30, 2017

103B.101 BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

Subd. 12. **Authority to issue penalty orders.** (a) Except as provided under subdivision 12a, the board may issue an order requiring violations to be corrected and administratively assessing monetary penalties of up to \$10,000 per violation for violations of this chapter and chapters 103C, 103D, 103E, 103F, and 103G, any rules adopted under those chapters, and any standards, limitations, or conditions established by the board.

(b) Administrative penalties issued by the board under paragraph (a) or subdivision 12a, may be appealed according to section 116.072, if the recipient of the penalty requests a hearing by notifying the commissioner in writing within 30 days after receipt of the order. For the purposes of this section, the terms "commissioner" and "agency" as used in section 116.072 mean the board. If a hearing is not requested within the 30-day period, the order becomes a final order not subject to further review.

(c) Administrative penalty orders issued under paragraph (a) or subdivision 12a, may be enforced under section 116.072, subdivision 9. Penalty amounts must be remitted within 30 days of issuance of the order.

Subd. 12a. **Authority to issue penalty orders.** (a) A county or watershed district with jurisdiction or the Board of Water and Soil Resources may issue an order requiring violations of the water resources riparian protection requirements under sections 103F.415, 103F.421, and 103F.48 to be corrected and administratively assessing monetary penalties up to \$500 for noncompliance commencing on day one of the 11th month after the noncompliance notice was issued. The proceeds collected from an administrative penalty order issued under this section must be remitted to the county or watershed district with jurisdiction over the noncompliant site or otherwise remitted to the Board of Water and Soil Resources.

(b) Before exercising this authority, the Board of Water and Soil Resources must adopt a plan containing procedures for the issuance of administrative penalty orders by local governments and the board as authorized in this subdivision. This plan, and any subsequent amendments, will become effective 30 days after being published in the State Register. The initial plan must be published in the State Register no later than July 1, 2017.

(c) Administrative penalties may be reissued and appealed under paragraph (a) according to section 103F.48, subdivision 9.

103E.315 ASSESSMENT OF DRAINAGE BENEFITS AND DAMAGES.

Subd. 8. **Extent of damages.** (a) Damages to be paid may include:

- (1) the fair market value of the property required for the channel of an open ditch and the permanent strip of perennial vegetation under section 103E.021;
- (2) the diminished value of a farm due to severing a field by an open ditch;
- (3) loss of crop production during drainage project construction;
- (4) the diminished productivity or land value from increased overflow; and
- (5) costs to restore a perennial vegetative cover or structural practice existing under a federal or state conservation program adjacent to the permanent drainage system right-of-way and damaged by the drainage project.

(b) When damages are determined to acquire or otherwise provide compensation for buffer strips or alternative riparian water quality practices previously installed as required by section 103F.48, subdivision 3, the viewers and drainage authority shall consider the land use prior to buffer strip or alternative practice installation in determining the fair market value of the property under paragraph (a), clause (1).

103F.421 ENFORCEMENT. (*Soil Loss*)

Subd. 4. **Application for cost-sharing funds.** The landowner has 90 days after a complaint is substantiated to apply for state cost-sharing funds. Fifty percent of the cost share will be provided if the application is not made within 90 days after the settlement is filed, unless the soil and water conservation district or the board provides an extension. An extension must be granted if funds are not available.

Subd. 6. **Application of state and federal law.** Nothing in this section is intended to preclude the application of other applicable state or federal law.

103F.48 RIPARIAN PROTECTION AND WATER QUALITY PRACTICES.

Subdivision 1. **Definitions.** (a) For the purposes of this section, the following terms have the meanings given them.

(b) "Board" means the Board of Water and Soil Resources.

(c) "Buffer" means an area consisting of perennial vegetation, excluding invasive plants and noxious weeds, adjacent to all bodies of water within the state and that protects the water resources of the state from runoff pollution; stabilizes soils, shores, and banks; and protects or provides riparian corridors.

(d) "Buffer protection map" means buffer maps established and maintained by the commissioner of natural resources.

(e) "Commissioner" means the commissioner of natural resources.

(f) "Executive director" means the executive director of the Board of Water and Soil Resources.

(g) "Local water management authority" means a watershed district, metropolitan water management organization, or county operating separately or jointly in its role as local water management authority under chapter 103B or 103D.

(h) "Normal water level" means the level evidenced by the long-term presence of surface water as indicated directly by hydrophytic plants or hydric soils or indirectly determined via hydrological models or analysis.

(i) "Public waters" ~~has the meaning given in section 103G.005, subdivision 15. The term means public waters as used in this section applies to waters that are on the public waters inventory as provided in section 103G.201.~~

(j) "With jurisdiction" means a board determination that the county or watershed district has

adopted a rule, ordinance, or official controls providing procedures for the issuance of administrative penalty orders, enforcement, and appeals for purposes of this section and section 103B.101, subdivision 12a.

Subd. 2. **Purpose.** It is the policy of the state to establish riparian buffers and water quality practices to:

- (1) protect state water resources from erosion and runoff pollution;
- (2) stabilize soils, shores, and banks; and
- (3) protect or provide riparian corridors.

Subd. 3. **Water resources riparian protection requirements on public waters and public drainage systems.** (a) Except as provided in paragraph (b), landowners owning property adjacent to a water body identified and mapped on a buffer protection map must maintain a buffer to protect the state's water resources as follows:

(1) for all public waters, the more restrictive of:

(i) a 50-foot average width, 30-foot minimum width, continuous buffer of perennially rooted vegetation; or

(ii) the state shoreland standards and criteria adopted by the commissioner under section [103F.211](#); and

(2) for public drainage systems established under chapter 103E, a 16.5-foot minimum width continuous buffer as provided in section 103E.021, subdivision 1. The buffer vegetation shall not impede future maintenance of the ditch.

(b) A landowner owning property adjacent to a water body identified in a buffer protection map and whose property is used for cultivation farming may meet the requirements under paragraph (a) by adopting an alternative riparian water quality practice, or combination of structural, vegetative, and management practices, based on the Natural Resources Conservation Service Field Office Technical Guide ~~or~~ common alternative practices adopted and published by the board, other practices approved by the board, or practices based on local conditions approved by the local soil and water conservation district that are consistent with the Field Office Technical Guide, that provide water quality protection comparable to the buffer protection for the water body that the property abuts. Included in these practices are retention ponds and alternative measures that prevent overland flow to the water resource.

(c) The width of a buffer on public waters must be measured from the top or crown of the bank. Where there is no defined bank, measurement must be from the edge of the normal water level. The width of the buffer on public drainage systems must be measured as provided in section 103E.021, subdivision 1.

(d) Upon request by a landowner or authorized agent or operator of a landowner, a technical professional employee or contractor of the soil and water conservation district or its delegate may issue a validation of compliance with the requirements of this subdivision. The soil and water conservation district validation may be appealed to the board as described in subdivision 9.

(e) Buffers or alternative water quality practices required under paragraph (a) or (b) must be in place on or before:

- (1) November 1, 2017, for public waters; and
- (2) November 1, 2018, for public drainage systems.

(f) Nothing in this section limits the eligibility of a landowner or authorized agent or operator of a landowner to participate in federal or state conservation programs, including enrolling or reenrolling in federal conservation programs.

(g) After the effective date of this section, a person planting buffers or water quality protection practices to meet the requirements in paragraph (a) must use only seed mixes verified by the Department of

Agriculture as consistent with chapter 18G or 21 to prevent contamination with Palmer amaranth or other noxious weed seeds.

Subd. 4. **Local water resources riparian protection.** In consultation with local water management authorities, on or before July 1, 2017, the soil and water conservation district shall develop, adopt, and submit to each local water management authority within its boundary a summary of watercourses for inclusion in the local water management authority's plan. A local water management authority that receives a summary of watercourses identified under this subdivision must incorporate an addendum to its comprehensive local water management plan or comprehensive watershed management plan to include the soil and water conservation district recommendations by July 1, 2018. The incorporation to include the summary of watercourses provided by the soil and water conservation district does not require a plan amendment as long as a copy of the included information is distributed to all agencies, organizations, and individuals required to receive a copy of the plan changes. A local water management authority that receives a summary of watercourses identified under this subdivision must address implementation of the soil and water conservation district recommendations when revising its comprehensive local water management plan as part of a regularly scheduled update to its comprehensive local water management plan or development of a comprehensive watershed management plan under section 103B.801.

Subd. 5. **Exemptions.** Land adjacent to waters subject to subdivision 3 is exempt from the water resource protection requirements under subdivision 3, to the extent these exemptions are not inconsistent with the requirements of the state shoreland rules adopted by the commissioner pursuant to section [103F.211](#), if it is:

- (3) enrolled in the federal Conservation Reserve Program;
- (4) used as a public or private water access or recreational use area including stairways, landings, picnic areas, access paths, beach and watercraft access areas, and permitted water-oriented structures as provided in the shoreland model standards and criteria adopted pursuant to section [103F.211](#) or as provided for in an approved local government shoreland ordinance;
- (5) covered by a road, trail, building, or other structures; or
- (6) regulated by a national pollutant discharge elimination system/state disposal system (NPDES/SDS) permit under Minnesota Rules, chapter 7090, and provides water resources riparian protection, in any of the following categories:
 - (i) municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4);
 - (ii) construction storm water (CSW); or
 - (iii) industrial storm water (ISW);
- (7) part of a water-inundation cropping system; or
- (8) in a temporary nonvegetated condition due to drainage tile installation and maintenance, alfalfa or other perennial crop or plant seeding, or construction or conservation projects authorized by a federal, state, or local government unit.

Subd. 6. **Local implementation and assistance.** (a) Soil and water conservation districts must assist landowners with implementation of the water resource riparian protection requirements established in this section. For the purposes of this subdivision, assistance includes planning, technical assistance, implementation of approved alternative practices, and tracking progress toward compliance with the requirements.

(b) The commissioner or the board must provide sufficient funding to soil and water conservation districts to implement this section.

Subd. 7. Corrective actions. (a) If the soil and water conservation district determines a landowner is not in compliance with this section, the district must notify the county or watershed district with jurisdiction over the noncompliant site and the board. The county or watershed district with jurisdiction or the board must provide the landowner with a list of corrective actions needed to come into compliance and a practical timeline to meet the requirements in this section. The county or watershed district with jurisdiction must provide a copy of the corrective action notice to the board.

(b) A county or watershed district exercising jurisdiction under this subdivision and the enforcement authority granted in section 103B.101, subdivision 12a, shall affirm their jurisdiction and identify the ordinance, rule, or other official controls to carry out the compliance provisions of this section and section 103B.101, subdivision 12a, by notice to the board prior to March 31, 2017. A county or watershed district must provide notice to the board at least 60 days prior to the effective date of a subsequent decision on their jurisdiction.

(c) If the landowner does not comply with the list of actions and timeline provided, the county or watershed district may enforce this section under the authority granted in section 103B.101, subdivision 12a, or by rule of the watershed district or ordinance or other official control of the county. Before exercising administrative penalty authority, a county or watershed district must adopt a plan consistent with the plan adopted by the board containing procedures for the issuance of administrative penalty orders and may issue orders beginning November 1, 2017. If a county or watershed district with jurisdiction over the noncompliant site has not adopted a plan, rule, ordinance, or official control under this paragraph, the board must enforce this section under the authority granted in section 103B.101, subdivision 12a.

(d) If the county, watershed district, or board determines that sufficient steps have been taken to fully resolve noncompliance, all or part of the penalty may be forgiven.

(e) An order issued under paragraph (b) may be appealed to the board as provided under subdivision 9.

(f) A corrective action is not required for conditions resulting from a flood or other act of nature.

(g) A landowner agent or operator of a landowner may not remove or willfully degrade a riparian buffer or water quality practice, wholly or partially, unless the agent or operator has obtained a signed statement from the property owner stating that the permission for the work has been granted by the unit of government authorized to approve the work in this section or that a buffer or water quality practice is not required as validated by the soil and water conservation district. Removal or willful degradation of a riparian buffer or water quality practice, wholly or partially, by an agent or operator is a separate and independent offense and may be subject to the corrective actions and penalties in this subdivision.

Subd. 8. Funding subject to withholding. The board may withhold funding from a local water management authority with jurisdiction or a soil and water conservation district that fails to implement this section, or from a local water management authority that fails to implement subdivision 4. Funding may be restored upon the board's approval of a corrective action plan.

Subd. 9. Appeals of validations and penalty orders. A landowner or agent or operator may appeal the terms and conditions of a soil and water conservation district validation or an administrative penalty order to the board within 30 days of receipt of written or electronic notice of the validation or order. The request for appeal must be in writing. The appealing party must provide a copy of the validation or order that is being appealed, the basis for the appeal, and any supporting evidence. The request for appeal may be submitted personally, by first class mail, or electronically to the executive director. If a written or electronic request for appeal is not submitted within 30 days, the validation or order is final. The executive director shall review the request and supporting evidence and issue a decision

within 60 days of receipt of an appeal. The executive director's decision is appealable directly to the Court of Appeals pursuant to sections [14.63](#) to [14.69](#).

Subd. 10. Landowner financial assistance and public drainage system procedure.

(a) A landowner or drainage authority may contact the soil and water conservation district for information on how to apply for local, state, or federal cost-share grants, contracts, or loans that are available to establish buffers or other water resource protection measures.

(b) The provisions of sections [103E.011](#), [subdivision 5 103E.021](#); and [103E.715](#) may be used in advance or retroactively to acquire or provide compensation for all or part of the buffer strip establishment or alternative riparian water quality practices as required under subdivision 3, paragraph (a).

Subd. 11. **State lands.** This section applies to the state and its departments and agencies.

[477A.21] RIPARIAN PROTECTION AID.

Subdivision 1.

Definitions.

For purposes of this section, the following terms have the meanings given:

(1) "buffer protection map" has the meaning given under section 103F.48, subdivision 1; and

(2) "public watercourses" means public waters and public drainage systems subject to riparian protection requirements under section 103F.48.

Subd. 2.

Certifications to commissioner.

(a) The Board of Water and Soil Resources must certify to the commissioner of revenue, on or before July 1 each year, which counties and watershed districts have affirmed their jurisdiction under section 103F.48 and the proportion of centerline miles of public watercourses, and miles of public drainage system ditches on the buffer protection map, within each county and each watershed district within the county with affirmed jurisdiction.

(b) On or before July 1 each year, the commissioner of natural resources shall certify to the commissioner of revenue the statewide and countywide number of centerline miles of public watercourses and miles of public drainage system ditches on the buffer protection map.

Subd. 3.

Distribution.

(a) A county that is certified under subdivision 2, or that portion of a county containing a watershed district certified under subdivision 2, is eligible to receive aid under this section to enforce and implement the riparian protection and water quality practices under section 103F.48. Each county's preliminary aid amount is equal to the proportion calculated under paragraph (b) multiplied by the appropriation received each year by the commissioner for purposes of payments under this section.

(b) The commissioner must compute each county's proportion. A county's proportion is equal to

the ratio of the sum in clause (1) to the sum in clause (2):

(1) the sum of the total number of acres in the county classified as class 2a under section 273.13, subdivision 23, the countywide number of centerline miles of public watercourses on the buffer protection map, and the countywide number of miles of public drainage system ditches on the buffer protection map; and

(2) the sum of the statewide total number of acres classified as class 2a under section 273.13, subdivision 23, the statewide total number of centerline miles of public watercourses on the buffer protection map, and the statewide total number of public drainage system miles on the buffer protection map.

(c) Aid to a county must not be greater than \$200,000 or less than \$50,000. If the sum of the preliminary aids payable to counties under paragraph (a) is greater or less than the appropriation received by the commissioner, the commissioner of revenue must calculate the percentage of adjustment necessary so that the total of the aid under paragraph (a) equals the total amount received by the commissioner, subject to the minimum and maximum amounts specified in this paragraph. The minimum and maximum amounts under this paragraph must be adjusted by the ratio of the actual amount appropriated to \$10,000,000.

(d) If only a portion of a county is certified as eligible to receive aid under subdivision 2, the aid otherwise payable to that county under this section must be multiplied by a fraction, the numerator of which is the buffer protection map miles of the certified watershed districts contained within the county and the denominator of which is the total buffer protection map miles of the county.

(e) Any aid that would otherwise be paid to a county or portion of a county that is not certified under subdivision 2 shall be paid to the Board of Water and Soil Resources for enforcing and implementing the riparian protection and water quality practices under section 103F.48.

Subd. 4.

Payments.

The commissioner of revenue must compute the amount of riparian protection aid payable to each eligible county and to the Board of Water and Soil Resources under this section. On or before August 1 each year, the commissioner must certify the amount to be paid to each county and the Board of Water and Soil Resources in the following year, except that the payments for 2017 must be certified by July 15, 2017. The commissioner must pay riparian protection aid to counties and to the Board of Water and Soil Resources in the same manner and at the same time as aid payments under section 477A.015.

Laws of Minnesota 2017, 1st Special Session, Article 2, Chapter 93 (S.F. 844)

Sec. 146.

INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION; WAIVERS.

A soil and water conservation district must grant a conditional compliance waiver under Minnesota Statutes, section 103F.48, to landowners or authorized agents who have applied for and maintained eligibility for financial or technical assistance within one year of the dates listed in Minnesota Statutes,

section 103F.48, subdivision 3, paragraph (e), according to Minnesota Statutes, section 103F.48. A conditional compliance waiver also must be granted to landowners who are subject to a drainage proceeding commenced under Minnesota Statutes, sections 103E.011, subdivision 5; 103E.021, subdivision 6; and 103E.715. The conditional compliance waiver is valid until financial or technical assistance is available for buffer or alternative practices installation, but not later than November 1, 2018. A landowner or authorized agent that has filed a parcel-specific riparian protection compliance plan with the soil and water conservation district by November 1, 2017, shall be granted a conditional compliance waiver until July 1, 2018.

Laws of Minnesota 2015, 1st Special Session, Chapter 4, Article 4

Sec. 150. REPEALER

(c) Minnesota Statutes 2014, sections 103F.421, subdivision 5 (*Soil Loss Statute noncompliance subject to a civil penalty*); 103F.451 (*Soil Loss Statute not applicable without the adoption of a local ordinance*); and 114D.50, subdivision 4a (*regarding Clean Water Fund expenditures*), are repealed