

SB39 INTRODUCED



1 SB39
2 RRI4MNM-1
3 By Senator Chambliss
4 RFD: State Governmental Affairs
5 First Read: 06-Feb-24



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SYNOPSIS:

Under existing law, owners of certain dams and reservoirs may elect to participate in statutorily provided safety procedures.

This bill would provide safety procedures for state-owned dams and reservoirs whose owners have elected to be subject to these procedures.

A BILL
TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

Relating to dam safety; to amend Sections 2, 3, and 5 of Act 2023-414, 2023 Regular Session, now appearing as Sections 33-7-71, 33-7-72, and 33-7-74, Code of Alabama 1975, to provide safety procedures for state-owned dams and reservoirs whose owners have elected to be subject to these procedures.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. Sections 2, 3, and 5 of Act 2024-414, 2023 Regular Session, now appearing as Sections 33-7-71, 33-7-72, and 33-7-74, Code of Alabama 1975, are amended to read as follows:

"§33-7-71



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29 For the purposes of this article, the following terms
30 have the following meanings:

31 (1) ABANDON or ABANDONMENT. To render a dam
32 non-impounding by dewatering and filling the reservoir created
33 by the dam with solid materials, by diverting the natural
34 drainway around the site, or by removing a portion of ~~a~~ the
35 dam to allow drainage to occur the same, or nearly the same,
36 as before the construction of the dam.

37 (2) ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES. Negative impacts that may
38 occur upstream, downstream, or at locations remote from the
39 dam. The primary concerns are loss of human life, disruption
40 of public infrastructure, environmental impact, and economic
41 loss, including property damage.

42 (3) ALTERATIONS or REPAIRS. Alterations or repairs to
43 an existing dam and appurtenant ~~structures~~ works that affect
44 the safety of the dam or reservoir.

45 (4) APPURTENANT WORKS. The structures or machinery
46 incident or annexed to a dam whose purpose is to operate,
47 assist, and maintain a dam. The term includes spillways,
48 either in the dam or separate therefrom, the reservoir and its
49 rim, low level outlet works, and water conduits, including
50 tunnels, pipelines, or penstocks, either through the dam or
51 its abutments.

52 (5) BREACH. Partial removal of a dam, creating a
53 channel through the dam to the original stream bottom
54 elevation.

55 (6) DAM.

56 a. An artificial barrier, including appurtenant works,



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57 with the ability to impound water, wastewater, or liquid-borne
58 materials and to which either of the following apply:

59 1. Is 25 feet or more in height from the natural bed of
60 the stream or watercourse measured at the downstream toe of
61 the barrier, or from the lowest elevation of the outside limit
62 of the barrier, if it is not across a stream channel or
63 watercourse, to the maximum water storage elevation.

64 2. Has an impounding capacity at maximum water storage
65 elevation of 50 acre feet or more.

66 b. The term includes a fill or structure for highway or
67 railroad use or for any other purpose which impounds water.

68 c. This definition does not apply to any barrier not in
69 excess of six feet in height regardless of storage capacity or
70 which has a storage capacity at maximum water storage
71 elevation not greater than 15 acre feet regardless of height,
72 unless the barrier, due to its location or other physical
73 characteristics, is classified as a high hazard potential dam.

74 d. This definition does not apply to any dam subject to
75 the jurisdiction of any other state or federal agency.

76 e. The term does not include any obstruction in a canal
77 used to raise or lower water.

78 f. This term does not include privately owned dams,
79 regardless of the hazard designation, unless the owner has
80 voluntarily elected to participate in the program in
81 accordance with this article.

82 (7) DAYS. In establishing deadlines, means all calendar
83 days, including Sundays and holidays.

84 (8) EMERGENCY. ~~Includes all~~ All conditions leading to



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85 or causing a breach, overtopping, or any other condition of a
86 dam and its appurtenant ~~structures~~ works that may be construed
87 as unsafe or threatening to life or property.

88 (9) EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN. A plan that identifies the
89 area that would likely be inundated by the failure of a dam
90 and the actions that should be taken in the event of a failure
91 or threatening condition at the dam.

92 (10) ENGINEER. An engineer who has a background in
93 civil engineering and who satisfies all of the following:

94 a. Is a licensed professional engineer.

95 b. Is competent in areas related to dam investigation,
96 design, construction, and operation for the type of dam being
97 investigated, designed, constructed, or operated.

98 c. Has relevant experience in areas such as
99 investigation, design, construction, reconstruction,
100 enlargement, repair, alteration, maintenance, operation,
101 breach, removal, or abandonment of dams.

102 d. Understands adverse dam incidents, failures, and the
103 potential causes and consequences of failures.

104 e. Continues with necessary training and continuing
105 education to keep abreast of the state of the practice in dam
106 safety engineering.

107 (11) ENLARGEMENT. Any change in or addition to an
108 existing dam or reservoir that raises or may raise the water
109 storage elevation of the water impounded by the dam.

110 (12) HAZARD POTENTIAL. The possible incremental adverse
111 ~~incremental~~ consequences that result from the release of water
112 or stored contents due to failure of the dam or misoperation



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113 of the dam or ~~appurtenances~~ appurtenant works. The hazard
114 potential classification of a dam does not reflect in any way
115 on the current condition of the dam and its appurtenant
116 ~~structures~~ works, including safety, structural integrity, or
117 flood routing capacity.

118 (13) HIGH HAZARD POTENTIAL DAM. A dam assigned the high
119 hazard potential classification where the dam's failure or
120 misoperation will likely cause loss of human life.

121 (14) LOCAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY. The local
122 emergency management organization that has jurisdiction over
123 the area in which a dam or reservoir is located.

124 (15) LOW HAZARD POTENTIAL DAM. A dam assigned the low
125 hazard potential classification where failure or misoperation
126 results in no probable loss of human life and low economic or
127 environmental losses with those economic losses that do occur
128 being principally limited to the owner's property.

129 (16) PARTICIPATING OWNER. Any of the following that
130 elect to be included in this definition by written affidavit
131 delivered to the local emergency management agency:

- 132 a. Any municipal or quasi-municipal corporation.
- 133 b. Any county or quasi-county corporation.
- 134 c. Any public utility.
- 135 d. Any district as defined by Section 11-99A-2.
- 136 e. Any person.
- 137 f. The duly authorized agent, lessee, or trustee of any
138 entity described in paragraphs a. through e.
- 139 g. Receivers or trustees appointed by any court for any
140 entity described in paragraphs a. through e.



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141 h. This state and any department, board, commission,
142 institution, or agency thereof that voluntarily elects to be
143 subject to this article.

144 (17) PERSON. Any individual, bankruptcy trustee, firm,
145 association, organization, partnership, business trust,
146 corporation, limited liability corporation, limited liability
147 partnership, or company.

148 (18) PROBABLE. More likely than not to occur;
149 reasonably expected; realistic.

150 (19) RECONSTRUCTION. Removal and replacement of an
151 existing dam or a portion thereof.

152 (20) REMOVAL. Complete elimination of the dam
153 embankment or structure to restore the approximate original
154 topographic contours of the valley.

155 (21) RESERVOIR. Any area that contains or will contain
156 impounded water, wastewater, or liquid-borne materials by
157 virtue of its having been impounded by a dam. This term does
158 not include privately owned reservoirs, regardless of the
159 hazard designation, unless the owner has elected to
160 participate in the program in accordance with this article.

161 (22) SIGNIFICANT HAZARD POTENTIAL DAM. A dam assigned
162 the significant hazard potential classification where failure
163 or misoperation results in no probable loss of human life but
164 can result in major economic loss, environmental damage,
165 disruption of lifeline facilities, or other issues impacting
166 public safety and welfare.

167 (23) STATE-OWNED DAM OR RESERVOIR. Any dam or reservoir
168 that is owned by this state or a department, board,



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169 commission, institution, or agency thereof.

170 ~~(23)~~ (24) WATER STORAGE ELEVATION. The maximum elevation
171 of water surface which can be obtained by the dam or
172 reservoir."

173 "§33-7-72

174 (a) A participating owner shall ensure plans and
175 specifications for initial construction, reconstruction,
176 enlargement, alteration, repair, operation, breach,
177 abandonment, or removal of dams and reservoirs, and the
178 supervision of the construction of dams and reservoirs shall
179 be in the charge of an engineer and assisted by qualified
180 geologists and other specialists as necessary.

181 (b) A participating owner of any dam or reservoir shall
182 ensure the dam or reservoir is inspected a minimum of once
183 every two years by an engineer. The engineer shall certify to
184 the local emergency management agency that the inspection has
185 been completed and deliver a record of the inspection to the
186 owner.

187 (c) A participating owner shall notify the local
188 emergency management agency in writing of the construction or
189 the enlargement of any dam or reservoir. Plans and
190 specifications shall be signed and sealed by the design
191 engineer.

192 (d) Upon the transfer of ownership of any dam or
193 reservoir, the current participating owner shall notify the
194 local emergency management agency. The subsequent owner may
195 elect to continue participating in the inspection program but
196 may also elect to cease participation with no penalty.



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197 (e) A participating owner of a state-owned dam or
198 reservoir shall submit a written affidavit to the local
199 emergency management agency for each state-owned dam or
200 reservoir elected to be subject to this article.

201 (f) Notwithstanding any other provision of this
202 article, a state-owned dam or reservoir that is subject to
203 this article shall be inspected a minimum of once every five
204 years by an engineer, so long as sufficient funds have been
205 appropriated by the Legislature to, or sufficient relevant
206 grant funds have been obtained by, the participating owner of
207 the state-owned dam or reservoir. The engineer shall certify
208 to the local emergency management agency that the inspection
209 has been completed and deliver a record of the inspection to
210 the owner."

211 "§33-7-74

212 (a) The local emergency management agency has neither
213 inspection nor regulatory duty or responsibility.

214 (b) Records pertaining to dams and reservoirs kept by
215 and in the possession of the local emergency management agency
216 shall not be public documents.

217 (c) Nothing in this article shall be construed to
218 relieve a participating owner or operator of a dam or
219 reservoir of the legal duties, obligations, or liabilities, or
220 to waive any immunity, incident to the ownership or operation
221 of the dam or reservoir."

222 Section 2. This act shall become effective on October
223 1, 2024.