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SENATE BILL No. 187

Proposed Changes to introduced printing by AM018701

DIGEST OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT

Debt. Provides that the debt provisions of the bill only apply to a regional water, sewage, or solid waste district created after June 30, 2026.

A BILL FOR AN ACT to amend the Indiana Code concerning environmental law.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Indiana:

1 SECTION 1. IC 13-26-1-2 IS AMENDED TO READ AS
2 FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026]: Sec. 2. (a) At any time after
3 the creation of a district, the district, after motion by the district's board
4 **and in consultation with the district authority established under**
5 **IC 13-26-11-15**, may file a petition with the department requesting the
6 approval of the department permitting the district to:

7 (1) increase or add to the district's purposes or modify the district
8 plan approved by the department;
9 (2) abandon or surrender all or part of a purpose or plan
10 approved by the department; or
11 (3) subject to IC 13-26-4-1, increase the number of persons
12 serving on the board of trustees.

13 (b) The department may:

14 (1) approve;
15 (2) modify and approve; or
16 (3) reject;

17 a request received under this section.

18 SECTION 2. IC 13-26-4-3 IS AMENDED TO READ AS
19 FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026]: Sec. 3. (a) Instead of
20 electing the board, an order establishing a district may provide for

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1 appointments to the board by the elected executive or legislative
 2 officers of the eligible entities having territory in the district.

3 **(b) An appointed trustee under this chapter serves at the
 4 pleasure of the appointing authority.**

5 SECTION 3. IC 13-26-5-2, AS AMENDED BY P.L.232-2023,
 6 SECTION 2, IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE
 7 JULY 1, 2026]: Sec. 2. **In consultation with the district authority
 8 established under IC 13-26-11-15**, a district may do the following:

- 9 (1) Sue or be sued.
- 10 (2) Make contracts in the exercise of the rights, powers, and
 duties conferred upon the district.
- 12 (3) Adopt and alter a seal and use the seal by causing the seal to
 be impressed, affixed, reproduced, or otherwise used. However,
 the failure to affix a seal does not affect the validity of an
 instrument.
- 16 (4) Adopt, amend, and repeal the following:
 - 17 (A) Bylaws for the administration of the district's affairs.
 - 18 (B) Rules and regulations for the following:
 - 19 (i) The control of the administration and operation of
 the district's service and facilities.
 - 21 (ii) The exercise of all of the district's rights of
 ownership.
- 23 (5) Construct, acquire, lease, operate, or manage works and
 obtain rights, easements, licenses, money, contracts, accounts,
 liens, books, records, maps, or other property, whether real,
 personal, or mixed, of a person or an eligible entity.
- 27 (6) Assume in whole or in part any liability or obligation of:
 - 28 (A) a person;
 - 29 (B) a nonprofit water, sewage, or solid waste project
 system; or
 - 31 (C) an eligible entity;

32 including a pledge of part or all of the net revenues of a works to
 33 the debt service on outstanding bonds of an entity in whole or in
 34 part in the district and including a right on the part of the district
 35 to indemnify and protect a contracting party from loss or liability
 36 by reason of the failure of the district to perform an agreement
 37 assumed by the district or to act or discharge an obligation.

38 (7) Fix, alter, charge, and collect reasonable rates and other
 39 charges in the area served by the district's facilities to every
 40 person whose premises are, whether directly or indirectly,
 41 supplied with water or provided with sewage or solid waste
 42 services by the facilities for the purpose of providing for the



1 following:

2 (A) The payment of the expenses of the district.

3 (B) The construction, acquisition, improvement, extension,

4 repair, maintenance, and operation of the district's facilities

5 and properties.

6 (C) The payment of principal or interest on the district's

7 obligations.

8 (D) To fulfill the terms of agreements made with:

9 (i) the purchasers or holders of any obligations; or

10 (ii) a person or an eligible entity.

11 (8) Except as provided in sections 2.5 and 2.6 of this chapter,

12 require connection to the district's sewer system of property

13 producing sewage or similar waste, and require the

14 discontinuance of use of privies, cesspools, septic tanks, and

15 similar structures if:

16 (A) there is an available sanitary sewer within three

17 hundred (300) feet of:

18 (i) the property line, if the property is adjacent to a

19 body of water, including a lake, river, or reservoir;

20 (ii) any part of a subdivision, or land that is divided or

21 proposed to be divided into lots, whether contiguous or

22 subject to zoning requirements, for the purpose of sale

23 or lease as part of a larger common plan of

24 development or sale; or

25 (iii) for all other properties, the improvement or other

26 structure from which the sewage or similar waste is

27 discharged;

28 (B) the district has given written notice by certified mail to

29 the property owner at the address of the property at least

30 ninety (90) days before a date for connection to be stated in

31 the notice and the notice includes a list of the applicable

32 exemptions from connecting to the sewer system available

33 to the property owner that are described in section 2.5 of

34 this chapter; and

35 (C) if the property is located outside the district's territory:

36 (i) the district has obtained and provided to the

37 property owner (along with the notice required by

38 clause (B)) a letter of recommendation from the local

39 health department that there is a possible threat to the

40 public's health; and

41 (ii) if the property is also located within the

42 extraterritorial jurisdiction of a municipal sewage



works under IC 36-9-23 or a public sanitation department under IC 36-9-25, the municipal works board or department of public sanitation has acknowledged in writing that the property is within the municipal sewage works or department of public sanitation's extraterritorial jurisdiction, but the municipal works board or department of public sanitation is unable to provide sewer service.

9 However, a district may not require the owner of a property
10 described in this subdivision to connect to the district's sewer
11 system if the property is already connected to a sewer system
12 that has received an NPDES permit and has been determined to
13 be functioning satisfactorily.

14 (9) Provide by ordinance for a reasonable penalty, not to exceed
15 one hundred dollars (\$100) per day, for failure to connect and
16 also apply to the circuit or superior court of the county in which
17 the property is located for an order to force connection, with the
18 cost of the action, including reasonable attorney's fees of the
19 district, to be assessed by the court against the property owner in
20 the action.

27 (12) Construct, acquire by purchase or otherwise, operate, lease,
28 preserve, and maintain works considered necessary to
29 accomplish the purposes of the district's establishment within or
30 outside the district and enter into contracts for the operation of
31 works owned, leased, or held by another entity, whether public
32 or private.

33 (13) Hold, encumber, control, acquire by donation, purchase, or
34 condemnation, construct, own, lease as lessee or lessor, use, and
35 sell interests in real and personal property or franchises within
36 or outside the district for:

37 (A) the location or protection of works;

38 (B) the relocation of buildings, structures, and
39 improvements situated on land required by the district or for
40 any other necessary purpose; or

41 (C) obtaining or storing material to be used in constructing
42 and maintaining the works.

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1 (14) Upon consent of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the
 2 board, merge or combine with another district into a single
 3 district on terms so that the surviving district:
 4 (A) is possessed of all rights, franchises, and authority of
 5 the constituent districts; and
 6 (B) is subject to all the liabilities, obligations, and duties of
 7 each of the constituent districts, with all rights of creditors
 8 of the constituent districts being preserved unimpaired.

9 (15) Provide by agreement with another eligible entity for the
 10 joint construction of works the district is authorized to construct
 11 if the construction is for the district's own benefit and that of the
 12 other entity. For this purpose the cooperating entities may jointly
 13 appropriate land either within or outside their respective borders
 14 if all subsequent proceedings, actions, powers, liabilities, rights,
 15 and duties are those set forth by statute.

16 (16) Enter into contracts with a person, an eligible entity, the
 17 state, or the United States to provide services to the contracting
 18 party for any of the following:
 19 (A) The distribution or purification of water.
 20 (B) The collection or treatment of sanitary sewage.
 21 (C) The collection, disposal, or recovery of solid waste.

22 (17) Make provision for, contract for, or sell the district's
 23 byproducts or waste.

24 (18) Exercise the power of eminent domain, including for
 25 purposes of siting sewer or water utility infrastructure, but only
 26 after the district attempts to use existing public rights-of-way or
 27 easements.

28 (19) Remove or change the location of a fence, building,
 29 railroad, canal, or other structure or improvement located within
 30 or outside the district. If:
 31 (A) it is not feasible or economical to move the building,
 32 structure, or improvement situated in or upon land acquired;
 33 and
 34 (B) the cost is determined by the board to be less than that
 35 of purchase or condemnation;
 36 the district may acquire land and construct, acquire, or install
 37 buildings, structures, or improvements similar in purpose to be
 38 exchanged for the buildings, structures, or improvements under
 39 contracts entered into between the owner and the district.

40 (20) Employ consulting engineers, superintendents, managers,
 41 and other engineering, construction, and accounting experts,
 42 attorneys, bond counsel, employees, and agents that are



1 necessary for the accomplishment of the district's purpose and
 2 fix their compensation.

3 (21) Procure insurance against loss to the district by reason of
 4 damages to the district's properties, works, or improvements
 5 resulting from fire, theft, accident, or other casualty or because
 6 of the liability of the district for damages to persons or property
 7 occurring in the operations of the district's works and
 8 improvements or the conduct of the district's activities.

9 (22) Exercise the powers of the district without obtaining the
 10 consent of other eligible entities. However, the district shall:

11 (A) restore or repair all public or private property damaged
 12 in carrying out the powers of the district and place the
 13 property in the property's original condition as nearly as
 14 practicable; or

15 (B) pay adequate compensation for the property.

16 (23) Dispose of, by public or private sale or lease, real or
 17 personal property determined by the board to be no longer
 18 necessary or needed for the operation or purposes of the district.

19 SECTION 4. IC 13-26-10-0.5 IS ADDED TO THE INDIANA
 20 CODE AS A NEW SECTION TO READ AS FOLLOWS
 21 [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026]: Sec. 0.5. (a) A district [created after
 22 June 30, 2026,] may not incur any indebtedness under this chapter
 23 without first obtaining the approval of the county fiscal body in
 24 which the district is located.

25 (b) If a district [created after June 30, 2026,] contains territory
 26 in more than one (1) county, the district shall first obtain the
 27 approval of the county fiscal body of the county that contains more
 28 than fifty percent (50%) of the district's service area before the
 29 district may incur any indebtedness under this chapter.

30 SECTION 5. [EFFECTIVE UPON PASSAGE] (a) The legislative
 31 council is urged to assign to the appropriate interim study
 32 committee the task of studying whether to transfer administrative
 33 duties under IC 13-26 from the department of environmental
 34 management to another agency or entity.

35 (b) This SECTION expires December 31, 2026.

36 SECTION 6. An emergency is declared for this act.[

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