

Environmental Protection Law of the People's Republic of China (2014 Revision)[Effective] □□(2014)

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Order of the President of the People's Republic of China
(No. 9)

The Environmental Protection Law of the People's Republic of China, as revised and adopted at the 8th session of the Standing Committee of the Twelfth National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China on April 24, 2014, is hereby issued, and shall come into force on January 1, 2015.

President of the People's Republic of China: Xi Jinping
April 24, 2014

Environmental Protection Law of the People's Republic of China

(Adopted at the 11th session of the Standing Committee of the Seventh National People's Congress on December 26, 1989, and revised at the 8th session of the Standing Committee of the Twelfth National People's Congress on April 24, 2014)

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Chapter I General Provisions

Article 1 This Law is developed for the purposes of protecting and improving environment, preventing and controlling pollution and other public nuisances, safeguarding public health, promoting ecological civilization, and enhancing sustainable economic and social development.

Article 2 For the purposes of this Law, environment means the entirety of all natural elements and artificially transformed natural elements that affect the survival and development of human beings, including but not limited to air, water, seas, land, minerals, forests, grasslands, wetland, wildlife, natural and cultural relics, nature reserves, scenic spots, historical sites, and urban and rural areas.

Article 3 This Law shall apply to the territory of the People's Republic of China, and other sea areas under the jurisdiction of the People's Republic of China.

Article 4 Protecting environment is a fundamental national policy of the state.
The state shall adopt economic and technological policies and measures conducive to economically and cyclically utilizing resources, protecting and improving environment and enhancing the harmony between mankind and nature to coordinate economic and social development with environmental protection.

Article 5 Environmental protection shall adhere to the principles of giving priority to protection, focusing on prevention, conducting comprehensive treatment, engaging the general public, and enforcing accountability for damage.

Article 6 All entities and individuals shall have the obligation to protect environment.

The local people's governments at all levels shall be responsible for the environmental quality within their respective administrative regions.

Enterprises, public institutions, and other businesses shall prevent and reduce environmental pollution and ecological disruption, and assume liabilities for damage caused by them.

Citizens shall raise their awareness of environmental protection, adopt low-carbon and economical lifestyles, and conscientiously fulfill their obligation to protect environment.

Article 7 The state shall support scientific and technological research, development, and application for environmental protection, encourage the development of environmental protection industries, promote the information technology development for environmental protection, and increase the scientific and technological level of environmental protection.

Article 8 The people's governments at all levels shall provide more financial input in the protection and improvement of environment and the prevention and control of pollution and other public nuisances, and increase the utilization efficiency of financial funds.

Article 9 The people's governments at all levels shall strengthen the publicity and dissemination of information on environmental protection, encourage basic-level self-governing organizations of the masses, social organizations, and environmental protection volunteers to conduct publicity of environmental protection laws and regulations and environmental protection knowledge, and create a favorable atmosphere for environmental protection.

Education administrative departments and schools shall include environmental protection knowledge in school education to cultivate students' awareness of environmental protection.

News media shall publicize environmental protection laws and regulations and environmental protection knowledge, and oversee environment-related illegal acts.

Article 10 The environmental protection administrative department of the State Council shall generally supervise and administer the national environmental protection work, while the environmental protection administrative departments of the local people's governments at and above the county level shall generally supervise and administer the environmental protection work within their respective administrative regions.

The relevant departments of the people's governments at and above the county level and the environmental protection departments of the armed forces shall supervise and administer resource protection, pollution prevention and control, and other environmental protection work in accordance with the provisions of relevant laws.

Article 11 The people's governments shall reward outstanding entities and individuals in protecting and improving environment.

Article 12 Environment Day is celebrated on June 5 every year.

Chapter II Supervision and Administration

Article 13 The people's governments at and above the county level shall include the environmental protection work in their plans on national economic and social development.

The environmental protection administrative department of the State Council shall, in conjunction with the relevant departments, develop a plan on national environmental protection in accordance with the plan on national economic and social development, and submit it to the State Council for approval, publication, and implementation.

The environmental protection administrative departments of the local people's governments at and above the county level shall, in conjunction with the relevant departments, develop the plans on environmental protection for their respective administrative regions in accordance with the requirements of the plan on national environmental protection, and submit them to the people's governments at the same level for approval, publication, and implementation.

A plan on environmental protection shall include the objectives and tasks of and safeguards for ecological protection and pollution prevention and control, and be connected with the major function zoning plan, comprehensive plan on land use, and urban and rural development plan, among others.

Article 14 In organizing the development of economic and technological policies, the relevant departments of the State Council and the people's governments of all provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the Central Government shall fully consider the environmental impact thereof, and hear the opinions of the relevant parties and experts.

Article 15 The environmental protection administrative department of the State Council shall develop the national environmental quality standards.

For matters not included in the national environmental quality standards, the people's governments of provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the Central Government may develop local environmental quality standards; and for matters included in the national environmental quality standards, they may develop local environmental quality standards higher than the national standards. Local environmental quality standards shall be submitted to the environmental protection administrative department of the State Council for recordation.

The state shall encourage research on environmental criteria.

Article 16 The environmental protection administrative department of the State Council shall develop the national pollutant discharge standards in accordance with the national environmental quality standards and the national economic and technological conditions.

For matters not included in the national pollutant discharge standards, the people's governments of provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the Central Government may develop local pollutant discharge standards; and for matters included in the national pollutant discharge standards, they may develop local pollutant

discharge standards higher than the national standards. Local pollutant discharge standards shall be submitted to the environmental protection administrative department of the State Council for recordation.

Article 17 The state shall establish and improve environmental monitoring rules. The environmental protection administrative department of the State Council shall develop monitoring norms, organize a monitoring network in conjunction with the relevant departments, develop a general plan on the distribution of national environmental quality monitoring stations (points), establish a monitoring data sharing mechanism, and strengthen the administration of environmental monitoring.

The distribution of various types of environmental quality monitoring stations (points) for the relevant industries or specialties shall comply with the requirements of laws and regulations and the monitoring norms.

Monitoring institutions shall use monitoring equipment up to the national standards, and comply with the monitoring norms. Monitoring institutions and the persons in charge thereof shall be responsible for the truth and accuracy of monitoring data.

Article 18 The people's governments at and above the provincial level shall organize the relevant departments or commission specialized institutions to survey and assess the environmental condition, and establish an environmental and resource carrying capacity monitoring and early warning mechanism.

Article 19 An environmental impact assessment shall be conducted as legally required in the preparation of a relevant development and utilization plan or the construction of a project impacting the environment.

A development and utilization plan that has not undergone environmental impact assessment as legally required may not be implemented. The construction of a construction project that has not undergone environmental impact assessment as legally required may not be commenced.

Article 20 The state shall establish a coordination mechanism across administrative regions for the joint prevention and control of environmental pollution and ecological disruption in key regions and valley areas, and apply a uniform plan, uniform standards, uniform monitoring, and uniform prevention and control measures.

The prevention and control of environmental pollution and ecological disruption across administrative regions other than that in the preceding paragraph shall be coordinated by the people's governments at higher levels, or resolved through consultations by the relevant local people's governments.

Article 21 The state shall adopt policies and measures in finance, taxation, price, and government procurement, among others, to encourage and support the development of environmental protection industries such as technological equipment for environmental protection, comprehensive utilization of resources, and environmental services.

Article 22 The people's governments shall adopt policies and measures in finance, taxation, price, and government procurement, among others, to encourage and support the further pollutant discharge reduction by enterprises, public institutions, and other businesses after meeting the statutory requirements for the discharge of pollutants.

Article 23 The people's governments shall support the production changes, relocation, or closedown of enterprises, public institutions, and other businesses for the purpose of improving environment in accordance with the relevant provisions.

Article 24 The environmental protection administrative departments of the people's governments at and above the county level, the environmental supervision institutions authorized by them, and other departments with environmental protection supervision and administration functions shall have the authority to conduct the on-site inspection of enterprises, public

institutions, and other businesses that discharge pollutants. Those under inspection shall honestly provide relevant information and necessary materials. The departments or institutions conducting such inspection and the employees thereof shall keep the trade secrets of those under inspection.

Article 25 Where the discharge of pollutants by enterprises, public institutions, and other businesses in violation of laws and regulations has caused or may cause any serious pollution, the environmental protection administrative departments of the people's governments at and above the county level and other departments with environmental protection supervision and administration functions may seize or impound the facilities or equipment causing the discharge of pollutants.

Article 26 The state shall apply an objectives responsibility system and an evaluation and review system to environmental protection. The people's governments at and above the county level shall include the achievement of environmental protection objectives in the evaluation of their respective departments with environmental protection supervision and administration functions and the persons in charge thereof as well as the people's governments at lower levels and the persons in charge thereof, as an important basis for the evaluation and review of them. The evaluation results shall be made available to the public.

Article 27 The people's governments at and above the county level shall report annually the environmental condition and the achievement of environmental protection objectives to the people's congresses at the same level or the standing committees thereof, and report in a timely manner the major environmental events to the standing committees of the people's congresses at the same level, to receive supervision according to the law.

Chapter III Environmental Protection and Improvement

Article 28 The local people's governments at all levels shall, according to environmental protection objectives and pollution control tasks, adopt effective measures to improve environmental quality.

The relevant local people's governments in key regions and valley areas that fail to reach the national environmental quality standards shall develop plans on reaching such standards during a specified period, and adopt measures to reach such standards as scheduled.

Article 29 The state shall draw ecological red lines in key ecological function zones, ecological sensitive areas and fragile areas, and other areas to apply strict protection.

The people's governments at all levels shall adopt measures to protect and prohibit any damage to the regions with various types of typical natural ecosystems, regions with a natural distribution of rare or endangered wild animals or plants, regions where major sources of water are conserved, natural relics such as geological structures of great scientific and cultural values, famous regions where karst caves or fossil deposits are distributed, glaciers, volcanoes, and hot springs, cultural relics, and ancient and precious trees.

Article 30 In the development and utilization of natural resources, the development shall be rational to protect biological diversity and ecological safety, and the relevant ecological protection and rehabilitation management plans shall be developed and implemented according to the law.

In the introduction of alien species and the research, development, and utilization of biotechnologies, measures shall be adopted to prevent any damage to biodiversity.

Article 31 The state shall establish and improve an ecological compensation mechanism.

The state shall increase financial transfer payments to ecological protection areas. The relevant local people's governments shall oversee the use of ecological compensation funds to ensure that such funds are used for ecological compensation purposes.

The state shall guide the people's governments of ecologically benefited areas and ecological protection areas in making ecological compensation through consultations or under the market rules.

Article 32 The state shall strengthen the protection of air, water, and soil, among others, and establish and improve the corresponding survey, monitoring, assessment, and remediation rules.

Article 33 The people's governments at all levels shall strengthen the protection of agricultural environment, promote the application of new technologies for protecting agricultural environment, strengthen the monitoring and early warning of agricultural pollution sources, and coordinate the relevant departments in adopting measures to prevent and control soil pollution, the desertification, alkalization, impoverishment and rocky desertification of land, land subsidence, vegetation deterioration, water loss and soil erosion, eutrophication of water bodies, exhaustion of water sources, extinction of species, and other ecological disturbances and promote the comprehensive prevention and control of plant diseases and insect pests.

The people's governments at the county and village levels shall improve the public service level for environmental protection in rural areas, and promote the comprehensive control and management of environment in rural areas.

Article 34 The State Council and the local people's governments at all levels in coastal areas shall strengthen the protection of marine environment. The discharge of pollutants and the dumping of wastes into the sea or the construction of coastal or marine engineering projects shall comply with laws and regulations and the relevant standards, and pollution and damage to the marine environment shall be prevented or reduced.

Article 35 In urban and rural construction, the characteristics of the local natural environment shall be considered, vegetation, waters and natural landscapes shall be protected, and the construction and management of gardens, green land, and scenic spots and historic sites in urban areas shall be strengthened.

Article 36 The state shall encourage and direct citizens, legal persons, and other organizations to use products and recycled products conducive to protecting environment to reduce wastes.

Government agencies and other organizations using fiscal funds shall, when purchasing and using products, equipment and facilities, give priority to those that are energy-saving, water-saving, material-saving or otherwise conducive to protecting environment.

Article 37 The local people's governments at all levels shall take measures to organize the sorting and recycling of domestic wastes.

Article 38 Citizens shall abide by environmental protection laws and regulations, cooperate in the implementation of environmental protection measures, and drop domestic wastes in waste separation bins as required to reduce damage to environment in daily lives.

Article 39 The state shall establish and improve the environment and health monitoring, survey and risk assessment rules, encourage and organize research on the impact of environmental quality on public health, and adopt measures to prevent and control diseases related to environmental pollution.

Chapter IV Prevention and Control of Pollution and Other Public Nuisances

Article 40 The state shall promote cleaner production and resource recycling.

The relevant departments of the State Council and the local people's governments at all levels shall adopt measures to promote the production and use of clean energy.

Enterprises shall give priority to the use of clean energy, and adopt techniques and equipment with higher resource utilization ratios and less pollutant discharges, technologies for the comprehensive utilization of wastes, and technologies for the decontamination of pollutants to reduce pollutants.

Article 41 The pollution prevention and control installations included in a construction project shall be designed, constructed and put to use simultaneously with the body of the construction project. Such installations shall satisfy the requirements of the approved environmental impact assessment document, and may not be dismantled or left unused without permission.

Article 42 Enterprises, public institutions, and other businesses that discharge pollutants shall adopt measures to prevent and control pollution and damage to environment caused by waste gas, waste water, waste residue, medical wastes, dust, malodorous gases, radioactive substances, noise, vibration, optical radiation, electromagnetic radiation, and other substances generated in their production, construction, and other activities.

Enterprises and public institutions that discharge pollutants shall establish accountability rules for environmental protection to specify the duties and responsibilities of persons in charge of them and other relevant persons.

Pollutant discharging entities under intensified supervision shall install and use monitoring equipment in accordance with the relevant provisions of the state and the monitoring norms, ensure the normal functioning of monitoring equipment, and preserve the original monitoring records.

It shall be prohibited to illegally discharge pollutants by installing underground pipelines, using seepage wells or pits, conducting perfusion, or altering or forging monitoring data, through the abnormal operation of pollution prevention and control installations, or by other means to avoid supervision.

Article 43 Enterprises, public institutions, and other businesses that discharge pollutants shall pay pollutant discharge fees in accordance with the relevant provisions of the state. Pollutant discharge fees shall be all used for the prevention and control of environmental pollution. No entity or individual may withhold such funds or use such funds for similar or other purposes.

No pollutant discharge fees shall be levied if environmental pollution tax has been levied according to the law.

Article 44 The state shall apply a total discharge volume control system to key pollutants. The State Council shall assign the total discharge volume control indicators of key pollutants to the people's governments of provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the Central Government for further breakdown and implementation. When implementing the national and local pollutant discharge standards, enterprises and public institutions shall comply with the total discharge volume control indicators of key pollutants further assigned to them.

For areas which exceed the state's total discharge volume control indicators of key pollutants or fail to achieve the environmental quality objectives determined by the state, the environmental protection administrative departments of the people's governments at and above the provincial level shall suspend the procedures for approving the environmental impact assessment documents on construction projects in such areas that will increase the total discharge volume of key pollutants.

Article 45 The state shall, according to the law, apply a licensing system to the discharge of pollutants. Enterprises, public institutions, and other businesses subject to pollutant discharge licensing management shall discharge pollutants according to the requirements of their respective pollutant discharge licenses; and those without a pollutant discharge license may not discharge pollutants.

Article 46 The state shall apply an elimination system to techniques, equipment, and products that cause serious environmental pollution. No entity or individual may produce, sell, transfer, or use techniques, equipment, or products that cause serious environmental pollution.

It shall be prohibited to introduce any technology, equipment, material, or product that fails to comply with the environmental protection provisions of China.

Article 47 The people's governments at all levels, the relevant departments thereof, enterprises, and public institutions shall effectively conduct the risk control, preparedness, response, rehabilitation, and other work on environmental emergencies, in accordance with the Emergency Response Law of the People's Republic of China.

The people's governments at and above the county level shall establish public monitoring and early warning mechanisms for environmental pollution, organize the development of early warning plans, and, when any environmental pollution may endanger public health and environmental safety, release early warning information and activate emergency response measures in a timely manner according to the law.

Enterprises and public institutions shall prepare emergency response plans for environmental emergencies in accordance with the relevant provisions of the state, and submit them to the environmental protection administrative departments and other relevant departments for recordation. Where any environment emergency occurs or may occur, an enterprise or public institution shall immediately take response measures, notify in a timely manner the entities and citizens to which any harm may be caused, and report to the environmental protection administrative department and other relevant departments.

After the end of the emergency response to an environmental emergency, the relevant people's government shall immediately organize an assessment on the environmental impact of and the losses caused by the event, and disclose the assessment results to the public in a timely manner.

Article 48 The production, storage, transportation, sale, use, and disposal of chemicals and materials containing radioactive substances must comply with the relevant provisions of the state to prevent environmental pollution.

Article 49 The people's governments at all levels and the agricultural and other relevant departments and institutions thereof shall guide agricultural businesses in plant and animal farming in a scientific manner, apply pesticides, chemical fertilizers and other agricultural inputs in a rational and scientific manner, and dispose of agricultural films, agricultural straws and other agricultural wastes in a scientific manner to prevent agricultural non-point source pollution.

It shall be prohibited to apply any solid wastes or waste water in noncompliance with agricultural standards or environmental protection standards to farmland. In the application of pesticides, chemical fertilizers, and other agricultural inputs or irrigation, measures shall be taken to prevent environmental pollution caused by heavy metals and other toxic and harmful substances.

The site selection, construction, and management of farms, breeding areas, and designated slaughter enterprises of livestock and poultry shall comply with the provisions of relevant laws and regulations. Entities and individuals engaging in livestock and poultry breeding or slaughter shall take measures to dispose of livestock and poultry manure and corpses, sewage, and other wastes in a scientific manner to prevent environmental pollution.

The people's governments at the county level shall be responsible for organizing the disposal of domestic wastes in rural areas.

Article 50 The people's governments at all levels shall arrange funds in their fiscal budgets for supporting the protection of drinking water sources, the treatment of domestic sewage and other wastes, the prevention and control of pollution from livestock and poultry breeding and slaughter, the prevention and control of soil pollution, the control of pollution from industrial and mining activities, and other environmental protection work in rural areas.

Article 51 The people's governments at all levels shall make overall plans on the construction of sewage treatment facilities and related pipeline networks, environmental sanitation facilities for the collection, transportation, and disposal, among others, of solid wastes, facilities and sites for the centralized disposal of dangerous wastes, and other public facilities for environmental protection in urban and rural areas, and ensure their normal functioning.

Article 52 The state shall encourage the purchase of environmental pollution liability insurance.

Chapter V Information Disclosure and Public Engagement

Article 53 Citizens, legal persons, and other organizations shall, according to the law, have the rights to obtain environmental information and participate in and oversee environmental protection.

The environmental protection administrative departments and other departments with environmental protection supervision and administration functions of the people's governments at all levels shall, according to the law, disclose environmental information, and improve the procedures for public engagement, to facilitate the participation in and oversight of environmental protection by citizens, legal persons, and other organizations.

Article 54 The environmental protection administrative department of the State Council shall release information on environmental quality and the monitoring of key pollution sources and other significant environmental information of the state in a unified way. The environmental protection administrative departments of the people's governments at and above the provincial level shall periodically release reports on the state of environment.

The environmental protection administrative departments and other departments with environmental protection supervision and administration functions of the people's governments at and above the county level shall, according to the law, disclose information on environmental quality, environmental monitoring, environmental emergencies, environmental administrative licensing, environmental administrative punishment, and collection and use of pollutant discharge fees, among others.

The environmental protection administrative departments and other departments with environmental protection supervision and administration functions of the local people's governments at and above the county level shall record the environmental violations of law by enterprises, public institutions, and other businesses in their social integrity files, and disclose the names of violators to the public in a timely manner.

Article 55 Pollutant discharging entities under intensified supervision shall honestly disclose to the public the names of their major pollutants, the discharge methods, the concentration and total volume of pollutants discharged, any discharge beyond the approved quota, and the construction and operation of pollution prevention and control installations to receive supervision from the general public.

Article 56 For a construction project for which an environmental impact report is required by the law, when preparing such a report, the construction employer shall provide an explanation to the public that may be affected, and fully solicit their

opinions.

After receiving the environmental impact report for a construction project, the department approving the environmental impact assessment documents for construction projects shall disclose the full text of the report, except the part involving any state secret or trade secret; and if it discovers that public opinions have not been fully solicited regarding the project, the department shall order the construction employer to solicit public opinions.

Article 57 Citizens, legal persons, and other organizations that discover any environmental pollution or ecological damage caused by any entity or individual shall have the right to report to environmental protection administrative departments or other departments with environmental protection supervision and administration functions.

Citizens, legal persons, and other organizations that discover any failure of the local people's governments at any level or the environmental protection administrative departments or other departments with environmental protection supervision and administration functions of the people's governments at and above the county level to legally perform their duties shall have the right to report to the authorities at higher levels or the supervisory authorities.

The authorities receiving such reports shall keep confidential the relevant information on whistleblowers, and protect the lawful rights and interests of whistleblowers.

Article 58 For an act polluting environment or causing ecological damage in violation of public interest, a social organization which satisfies the following conditions may institute an action in a people's court:

(1) It has been legally registered with the civil affairs department of the people's government at or above the level of a districted city.

(2) It has specially engaged in environmental protection for the public good for five consecutive years or more without any recorded violation of law.

A people's court shall, according to the law, accept an action instituted by a social organization that satisfies the provision of the preceding paragraph.

A social organization may not seek any economic benefit from an action instituted by it.

Chapter VI Legal Liability

Article 59 Where any enterprise, public institution, or other business is fined and ordered to make correction for illegally discharging pollutants but refuses to make correction, the administrative agency legally making the punishment decision may impose continuous fines on it in the amount of the original fine for each day from the next day after it is ordered to make correction.

The fine punishment as mentioned in the preceding paragraph shall be determined on the basis of factors such as the operation costs of pollution prevention and control installations, the direct losses caused by the illegal act and the illegal income as provided for by the relevant laws and regulations.

Based on the actual needs for environmental protection, the types of illegal acts subject to continuous daily fines as mentioned in the first paragraph hereof may be increased in local regulations.

Article 60 Where any enterprise, public institution, or other business discharges pollutants beyond the pollutant discharge standards or the total discharge volume control indicators of key pollutants, the environmental protection administrative department of the local people's government at or above the county level may order it to adopt measures such as restricting production or suspending business for rectification; and if the circumstances are serious, order it to terminate business or close down with the approval of the people's government with such approval power.

Article 61 Where any construction employer fails to submit the environmental impact assessment documents for its construction project according to the law or commences construction without permission before the environmental impact assessment documents are approved, the department with environmental protection supervision and administration functions shall order it to cease construction, and impose a fine on it, and may order restoration to the original state.

Article 62 Where, in violation of this Law, any pollutant discharging entity under intensified supervision fails to disclose or honestly disclose environmental information, the environmental protection administrative department of the local people's government at or above the county level shall order it to disclose the information, impose a fine on it, and issue a public announcement of the punishment.

Article 63 Where any enterprise, public institution, or other business commits any of the following acts, if no crime is constituted, in addition to imposing punishment in accordance with the provisions of relevant laws and regulations, the environmental protection administrative department or any other relevant department of the people's government at or above the county level shall transfer the case to the public security authority, which shall detain the directly liable person in charge and other directly liable persons for not less than 10 days but not more than 15 days; or, if the circumstances are relatively minor, for not less than 5 days but not more than 10 days:

(1) It refuses to comply with an order requiring it to cease construction of a construction project which has not undergone environmental impact assessment as legally required.

(2) It refuses to comply with an order requiring it to cease discharge of pollutants for its illegal discharge of pollutants without a pollutant discharge license.

(3) It illegally discharges pollutants by installing underground pipelines, using seepage wells or pits, conducting perfusion, or altering or forging monitoring data, through the abnormal operation of pollution prevention and control installations, or by other means to avoid supervision.

(4) It refuses to comply with an order requiring it to make correction for its production or use of pesticides which have been expressly prohibited by the state from production or use.

Article 64 Where any damage is caused by environmental pollution or ecological disruption, the tortfeasor shall assume tort liability in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Tort Law of the People's Republic of China.

Article 65 Where any environmental impact assessment institution, environmental monitoring institution, or institution engaging in the maintenance or operation of environmental monitoring equipment and pollution prevention and control installations makes falsification in the provision of relevant environmental services and is liable for the environmental pollution or ecological disruption caused, it shall assume joint and several liability with other parties liable for the environmental pollution or ecological disruption, in addition to punishment in accordance with the provisions of relevant laws and regulations.

Article 66 The time limitation for instituting an environmental action for damages shall be three years, starting from the time when a party knows or should have known the harm caused to the party.

Article 67 The people's governments at higher levels and the environmental protection administrative departments thereof shall strengthen supervision over the environmental protection work of the people's governments at lower levels and the relevant departments thereof, and, if they discover that any employees have committed any illegal acts for which

disciplinary actions shall be taken according to the law, recommend disciplinary actions to the appointment and removal authorities or supervisory authorities for such employees.

Where the relevant environmental protection administrative department fails to impose administrative punishment as otherwise legally required, the environmental protection administrative department of the people's government at a higher level may directly make a decision to impose administrative punishment.

Article 68 Where a local people's government at any level or the environmental protection administrative department or any other department with environmental protection supervision and administration functions of a people's government at or above the county level commits any of the following acts, the directly liable person in charge and other directly liable persons shall be subject to a demerit, a major demerit, or demotion; and if the consequences are serious, they shall be removed from office or expelled, and the primary person in charge thereof shall resign to assume the responsibility for the act:

- (1) Granting any administrative license despite that the conditions for granting the administrative license are not satisfied.
- (2) Harboring any environment-related illegal acts.
- (3) Failing to make a decision to order cessation of business or closedown as otherwise legally required.
- (4) Failing to investigate any discharge of pollutants beyond the prescribed standards, discharge of pollutants by means to avoid supervision, environmental accident, or ecological disruption caused by a failure to implement ecological protection measures and impose punishment in a timely manner, after discovering or receiving a report on it.
- (5) Seizing or impounding any facility or equipment of any enterprise, public institution, or other business in violation of this Law.
- (6) Altering or forging monitoring data or instigating others to do so.
- (7) Failing to disclose environmental information as otherwise legally required.
- (8) Withholding or using for similar or other purposes the pollutant discharge fees collected.
- (9) Other illegal acts as specified by laws and regulations.

Article 69 Whoever is suspected of a crime for violating this Law shall be subject to criminal liability according to the law.

Chapter VII Supplementary Provisions

Article 70 This Law shall come into force on January 1, 2015.