

THE AIR (PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF POLLUTION) ACT, 1981

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THE AIR (PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF POLLUTION) ACT, 1981

ACT NO. 14 OF 1981

[29th March, 1981.]

An Act to provide for the prevention, control and abatement of air pollution, for the establishment, with a view to carrying out the aforesaid purposes, of Boards, for conferring on and assigning to such Boards powers and functions relating thereto and for matters connected therewith.

WHEREAS decisions were taken at the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in June, 1972, in which India participated, to take appropriate steps for the preservation of the natural resources of the earth which, among other things, include the preservation of the quality of air and control of air pollution;

AND WHEREAS it is considered necessary to implement the decisions aforesaid in so far as they relate to the preservation of the quality of air and control of air pollution;

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Thirty-second Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

CHAPTER I PRELIMINARY

1. Short title, extent and commencement.—(1) This Act may be called the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.

(2) It extends to the whole of India.

(3) It shall come into force on such date¹ as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

2. Definitions.—In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,—

(a) “air pollutant” means any solid, liquid or gaseous substance² [(including noise)] present in the atmosphere in such concentration as may be or tend to be injurious to human beings or other living creatures or plants or property or environment;

(b) “air pollution” means the presence in the atmosphere of any air pollutant;

(c) “approved appliance” means any equipment or gadget used for the bringing of any combustible material or for generating or consuming any fume, gas or particulate matter and approved by the State Board for the purposes of this Act;

(d) “approved fuel” means any fuel approved by the State Board for the purposes of this Act;

(e) “automobile” means any vehicle powered either by internal combustion engine or by any method of generating power to drive such vehicle by burning fuel;

(f) “Board” means the Central Board or a State Board;

(g) “Central Board” means the³ [Central Pollution Control Board] constituted under section 3 of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 (6 of 1974);

(h) “chimney” includes any structure with an opening or outlet from or through which any air pollutant may be emitted;

(i) “control equipment” means any apparatus, device, equipment or system to control the quality and manner of emission of any air pollutant and includes any device used for securing the efficient operation of any industrial plant;

1. 16th May, 1981, *vide* notification No. G.S.R. 351(E), dated 15th May, 1981, *see* Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, sec. 3 (i).

2. Ins. by Act 47 of 1987, s. 2 (w.e.f. 1-4-1988).

3. Subs. by s. 2, *ibid.*, for “Central Board for the Prevention and Control of Water Pollution” (w.e.f. 1-4-1988).

(j) “emission” means any solid or liquid or gaseous substance coming out of any chimney, duct or flue or any other outlet;

(k) “industrial plant” means any plant used for any industrial or trade purposes and emitting any air pollutant into the atmosphere;

(l) “member” means a member of the Central Board or a State Board, as the case may be, and includes the Chairman thereof;

¹[(m) “occupier”, in relation to any factory or premises, means the person who has control over the affairs of the factory or the premises, and includes, in relation to any substance, the person in possession of the substance;]

(n) “prescribed” means prescribed by rules made under this Act by the Central Government or, as the case may be, the State Government;

(o) “State Board” means,—

(i) in relation to a State in which the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 (6 of 1974), is in force and the State Government has constituted for that State a ²[State Pollution Control Board] under section 4 of that Act, the said State Board; and

(ii) in relation to any other State, the State Board for the Prevention and Control of Air Pollution constituted by the State Government under section 5 of this Act.

CHAPTER II

CENTRAL AND STATE BOARDS FOR THE PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF AIR POLLUTION

³[**3. Central Pollution Control Board.**—The Central Pollution Control Board constituted under section 3 of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 (6 of 1974), shall, without prejudice to the exercise and performance of its powers and functions under that Act, exercise the powers and perform the functions of the Central Pollution Control Board for the prevention and control of air pollution under this Act.

4. State Pollution Control Boards constituted under section 4 of Act 6 of 1974 to be State Boards under this Act.—In any State in which the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 (6 of 1974), is in force and the State Government has constituted for that State a State Pollution Control Board under section 4 of that Act, such State Board shall be deemed to be the State Board for the Prevention and Control of air Pollution constituted under section 5 of this Act, and accordingly that State Pollution Control Board shall, without prejudice to the exercise and performance of its powers and functions under that Act, exercise the powers and perform the functions of the State Board for the prevention and control of air pollution under this Act.]

5. Constitution of State Boards.—(1) In any State in which the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 (6 of 1974), is not in force, or that Act is in force but the State Government has not constituted a ⁴[State Pollution Control Board] under that Act, the State Government shall, with effect from such date as it may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint, constitute a State Board for the Prevention and Control of Air Pollution under such name as may be specified in the notification, to exercise the powers conferred on, and perform the functions assigned to, that Board under this Act.

(2) A State Board constituted under this Act shall consist of the following members, namely:—

(a) a Chairman, being a person, having special knowledge or practical experience in respect of matters relating to environmental protection, to be nominated by the State Government:

Provided that the Chairman may be either whole-time or part-time as the State Government may think fit;

1. Subs. by Act 47 of 1987, s. 2, for clause (m) (w.e.f. 1-4-1988).

2. Subs. by s. 2, *ibid.*, for “State Board for the Prevention and Control of Water Pollution” (w.e.f. 1-4-1988).

3. Subs. by s. 3, *ibid.*, for sections 3 and 4 (w.e.f. 1-4-1988).

4. Subs. by s. 4, *ibid.*, for “State Board for the Prevention and Control of Water Pollution” (w.e.f. 1-4-1988).

(b) such number of officials, not exceeding five, as the State Government may think fit, to be nominated by the State Government to represent that Government;

(c) such number of persons, not exceeding five, as the State Government may think fit, to be nominated by the State Government from amongst the members of the local authorities functioning within the State;

(d) such number of non-officials, not exceeding three, as the State Government may think fit, to be nominated by the State Government to represent the interest of agriculture, fishery or industry or trade or labour or any other interest, which, in the opinion of that Government, ought to be represented;

(e) two persons to represent the companies or corporations owned, controlled or managed by the State Government, to be nominated by that Government;

¹[(f) a full-time member-secretary having such qualifications knowledge and experience of scientific, engineering or management aspects of pollution control as may be prescribed, to be appointed by the State Government:]

Provided that the State Government shall ensure that not less than two of the members are persons having special knowledge or practical experience in respect of matters relating to the improvement of the quality of air or the prevention, control or abatement of air pollution.

(3) Every State Board constituted under this Act shall be a body corporate with the name specified by the State Government in the notification issued under sub-section (1), having perpetual succession and a common seal with power, subject to the provisions of this Act, to acquire and dispose of property and to contract, and may by the said name sue or be sued.

6. Central Board to exercise the powers and perform the functions of a State Board in the Union territories.—No State Board shall be constituted for a Union territory and in relation to a Union territory, the Central Board shall exercise the powers and perform the functions of a State Board under this Act for that Union territory:

Provided that in relation to any Union territory the Central Board may delegate all or any of its powers and functions under this section to such person or body of persons as the Central Government may specify.

7. Terms and conditions of service of members.—(1) Save as otherwise provided by or under this Act, a member of a State Board constituted under this Act, other than the member-secretary, shall hold office for a term of three years from the date on which his nomination is notified in the Official Gazette:

Provided that a member shall, notwithstanding the expiration of his term, continue to hold office until his successor enters upon his office.

(2) The terms of office of a member of a State Board constituted under this Act and nominated under clause (b) or clause (e) of sub-section (2) of section 5 shall come to an end as soon as he ceases to hold the office under the State Government or, as the case may be, the company or corporation owned, controlled or managed by the State Government, by virtue of which he was nominated.

(3) A member of a State Board constituted under this Act, other than the member-secretary, may at any time resign his office by writing under his hand addressed,—

(a) in the case of the Chairman, to the State Government; and

(b) in any other case, to the Chairman of the State Board,

and the seat of the Chairman or such other member shall thereupon become vacant.

(4) A member of a State Board constituted under this Act, other than the member-secretary, shall be deemed to have vacated his seat, if he is absent without reason, sufficient in the opinion of the State Board, from three consecutive meetings of the State Board or where he is nominated under clause (c) of sub-section (2) of section 5, he ceases to be a member of the local authority and such vacation of seat

1. Subs. by Act 47 of 1987, s. 4, for clause (f) (w.e.f. 1-4-1988).

shall, in either case, take effect from such date as the State Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, specify.

(5) A casual vacancy in a State Board constituted under this Act shall be filled by a fresh nomination and the person nominated to fill the vacancy shall hold office only for the remainder of the term for which the member whose place he takes was nominated.

(6) A member of a State Board constituted under this Act shall be eligible for re-nomination ^{1***}

(7) The other terms and conditions of service of the Chairman and other members (except the member-secretary) of a State Board constituted under this Act shall be such as may be prescribed.

8. Disqualifications.—(1) No person shall be a member of a State Board constituted under this Act, who—

(a) is, or at any time has been, adjudged insolvent, or

(b) is of unsound mind and has been so declared by a competent court, or

(c) is, or has been, convicted of an offence which, in the opinion of the State Government, involves moral turpitude, or

(d) is, or at any time has been, convicted of an offence under this Act, or

(e) has directly or indirectly by himself or by any partner, any share or interest in any Firm or company carrying on the business of manufacture, sale, or hire of machinery, industrial plant, control equipment or any other apparatus for the improvement of the quality of air or for the prevention, control or abatement of air pollution, or

(f) is a director or a secretary, manager or other salaried officer or employee of any company or firm having any contract with the Board, or with the Government constituting the Board or with a local authority in the State, or with a company or corporation owned, controlled or managed by the Government, for the carrying out of programmes for the improvement of the quality of air or for the prevention, control or abatement of air pollution, or

(g) has so abused, in the opinion of the State Government, his position as a member, as to render his continuance on the State Board detrimental to the interest of the general public.

(2) The State Government shall, by order in writing, remove any member who is, or has become, subject to any disqualification mentioned in sub-section (1).

Provided that no order of removal shall be made by the State Government under this section unless the member concerned has been given a reasonable opportunity of showing cause against the same.

(3) Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-section (1) or sub-section (6) of section 7, a member who has been removed under this section shall not be eligible to continue to hold office until his successor enters upon his office, or, as the case may be, for re-nomination as a member.

9. Vacation of seats by members.—If a member of a State Board constituted under this Act becomes subject to any of the disqualifications specified in section 8, his seat shall become vacant.

10. Meetings of Board.—(1) For the purposes of this Act, a Board shall meet at least once in every three months and shall observe such rules of procedure in regard to the transaction of business at its meetings as may be prescribed:

Provided that if, in the opinion of the Chairman, any business of an urgent nature is to be transacted, he may convene a meeting of the Board at such time as he thinks fit for the aforesaid purpose.

(2) Copies of minutes of the meetings under sub-section (1) shall be forwarded to the Central Board and to the State Government concerned.

1. The words “but not for more than two terms” omitted by Act 47 of 1987, s. 5 (w.e.f. 1-4-1988).

11. Constitution of committees.—(1) A Board may constitute as many committees consisting wholly of members or partly of members and partly of other persons and for such purpose or purposes as it may think fit.

(2) A committee constituted under this section shall meet at such time and at such place, and shall observe such rules of procedure in regard to the transaction of business at its meetings, as may be prescribed.

(3) The members of a committee other than the members of the Board shall be paid such fees and allowances, for attending its meetings and for attending to any other work of the Board as may be prescribed.

12. Temporary association of persons with Board for particular purpose.—(1) A Board may associate with itself in such manner, and for such purposes, as may be prescribed, any person whose assistance or advice it may desire to obtain in performing any of its functions under this Act.

(2) A person associated with the Board under sub-section (1) for any purpose shall have a right to take part in the discussions of the Board relevant to that purpose, but shall not have a right to vote at a meeting of the Board and shall not be a member of the Board for any other purpose.

(3) A person associated with a Board under sub-section (1) shall be entitled to receive such fees and allowances as may be prescribed.

13. Vacancy in Board not to invalidate acts or proceedings.—No act or proceeding of a Board or any committee thereof shall be called in question on the ground merely of the existence of any vacancy in, or any defect in the constitution of, the Board or such committee, as the case may be.

14. Member-secretary and officers and other employees of State Boards.—(1) The terms and conditions of service of the member-secretary of a State Board constituted under this Act shall be such as may be prescribed.

¹[(2) The member-secretary of a State Board, whether constituted under this Act or not, shall exercise such powers and perform such duties as may be prescribed, or as may, from time to time, be delegated to him by the State Board or its Chairman.]

(3) subject to such rules as may be made by the State Government in this behalf, a State Board, whether constituted under this Act or not, may appoint such officers and other employees as it considers necessary for the efficient performance of its functions under this Act.

(4) The method of appointment, the conditions of service and the scales of pay of the officers (other than the member-secretary) and other employees of a State Board appointed under sub-section (3) shall be such as may be determined by regulations made by the State Board under this Act.

(5) Subject to such conditions as may be prescribed, a State Board constituted under this Act may from time to time appoint any qualified person to be a consultant to the Board and pay him such salary and allowances or fees, as it thinks fit.

15. Delegation of powers.—A State Board may, by general or special order, delegate to the Chairman or the member-secretary or any other officer of the Board subject to such conditions and limitations, if any, as may be specified in the order, such of its powers and functions under this Act as it may deem necessary.

CHAPTER III

POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF BOARDS

16. Functions of Central Board.—(1) Subject to the provisions of this Act, and without prejudice to the performance, of its functions under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 (6 of 1974), the main functions of the Central Board shall be to improve the quality of air and to prevent, control or abate air pollution in the country.

1. Subs. by Act 47 of 1987, s. 6, for sub-section (2) (w.e.f. 1-4-1988).

(2) In particular and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing functions, the Central Board may—

(a) advise the Central Government on any matter concerning the improvement of the quality of air and the prevention, control or abatement of air pollution;

(b) plan and cause to be executed a nation-wide programme for the prevention, control or abatement of air pollution;

(c) co-ordinate the activities of the State and resolve disputes among them;

(d) provide technical assistance and guidance to the State Boards, carry out and sponsor investigations and research relating to problems of air pollution and prevention, control or abatement of air pollution;

¹[(dd) perform such of the functions of any State Board as may be specified in and order made under sub-section (2) of section 18;]

(e) plan and organise the training of persons engaged or to be engaged in programmes for the prevention, control or abatement of air pollution on such terms and conditions as the Central Board may specify;

(f) organise through mass media a comprehensive programme regarding the prevention, control or abatement of air pollution;

(g) collect, compile and publish technical and statistical data relating to air pollution and the measures devised for its effective prevention, control or abatement and prepare manuals, codes or guides relating to prevention, control or abatement of air pollution;

(h) lay down standards for the quality of air;

(i) collect and disseminate information in respect of matters relating to air pollution;

(j) perform such other functions as may be prescribed.

(3) The Central Board may establish or recognise a laboratory or laboratories to enable the Central Board to perform its functions under this section efficiently.

(4) The Central Board may—

(a) delegate any of its functions under this Act generally or specially to any of the committees appointed by it;

(b) do such other things and perform such other acts as it may think necessary for the proper discharge of its functions and generally for the purpose of carrying into effect the purposes of this Act.

17. Functions of State Boards.—(1) Subject to the provisions of this Act, and without prejudice to the performance of its functions, if any, under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 (Act 6 of 1974), the functions of a State Board shall be—

(a) to plan a comprehensive programme for the prevention, control or abatement of air pollution and to secure the execution thereof;

(b) to advise the State Government on any matter concerning the prevention, control or abatement of air pollution;

(c) to collect and disseminate information relating to air pollution;

(d) to collaborate with the Central Board in organising the training of persons engaged or to be engaged in programmes relating to prevention, control or abatement of air pollution and to organise mass-education programme relating thereto;

1. Ins. by Act 47 of 1987, s. 7 (w.e.f. 1-4-1988).

(e) to inspect, at all reasonable times, any control equipment, industrial plant or manufacturing process and to give, by order, such directions to such persons as it may consider necessary to take steps for the prevention, control or abatement of air pollution;

(f) to inspect air pollution control areas at such intervals as it may think necessary, assess the quality of air therein and take steps for the prevention, control or abatement of air pollution in such areas;

(g) to lay down, in consultation with the Central Board and having regard to the standards for the quality of air laid down by the Central Board, standards for emission of air pollutants into the atmosphere from industrial plants and automobiles or for the discharge of any air pollutant into the atmosphere from any other source whatsoever not being a ship or an aircraft:

Provided that different standards for emission may be laid down under this clause for different industrial plants having regard to the quantity and composition of emission of air pollutants into the atmosphere from such industrial plants;

(h) to advise the State Government with respect to the suitability of any premises or location for carrying on any industry which is likely to cause air pollution;

(i) to Perform such other functions as may be prescribed or as may, from time to time, be entrusted to it by the Central Board or the State Government;

(j) to do such other things and to perform such other acts as it may think necessary for the proper discharge of its functions and generally for the purpose of carrying into effect the purposes of this Act.

(2) A State Board may establish or recognise a laboratory or laboratories to enable the State Board to perform its functions under this section efficiently.

18. Power to give directions.—¹[(1)]In the performance of its functions under this Act—

(a) the Central Board shall be bound by such directions in writing as the Central Government may give to it; and

(b) every State Board shall be bound by such directions in writing as the Central Board or the State Government may give to it:

Provided that where a direction given by the State Government is inconsistent with the direction given by the Central Board, the matter shall be referred to the Central Government for its decision.

²[(2) Where the Central Government is of the opinion that any State Board has defaulted in complying with any directions given by the Central Board under sub-section (1) and as a result of such default a grave emergency has arisen and it is necessary or expedient so to do in the public interest, it may, by order, direct the Central Board to perform any of the functions of the State Board in relation to such area, for such period and for such purposes, as may be specified in the order.

(3) Where the Central Board performs any of the functions of the State Board in pursuance of a direction under sub-section (2), the expenses, if any, incurred by the Central Board with respect to the performance of such functions may, if the State Board is empowered to recover such expenses, be recovered by the Central Board with interest (at such reasonable rate as the Central Government may, by order, fix) from the date when a demand for such expenses is made until it is paid from the person or persons concerned as arrears of land revenue or of public demand.

(4) For the removal of doubts, it is hereby declared that any directions to perform the functions of any State Board given under sub-section (2) in respect of any area would not preclude the State Board from performing such functions in any other area in the State or any of its other functions' in that area.]

1. Section 18 renumbered as sub-section (1) thereof by Act 47 of 1987, s. 8 (w.e.f. 1-4-1988).

2. Ins. by s. 8, *ibid.* (w.e.f. 1-4-1988).