

**NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT (EXCERPT)**  
**Act 451 of 1994**

**324.20114e Response activity review panel.**

Sec. 20114e. (1) The director shall establish a response activity review panel to advise him or her on disputes.

(2) The panel must consist of 15 individuals, appointed by the director. Each member of the panel must meet all of the following minimum requirements:

(a) Meet 1 or more of the following:

(i) Hold a current professional engineer's or professional geologist's license or registration from a state, tribe, or United States territory, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and have the equivalent of 6 years of full-time relevant experience.

(ii) Have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution of higher education in a discipline of engineering or science and the equivalent of 10 years of full-time relevant experience.

(iii) Have a master's degree from an accredited institution of higher education in a discipline of engineering or science and the equivalent of 8 years of full-time relevant experience.

(b) Remain current in his or her field through participation in continuing education or other activities.

(3) An individual is not eligible to be a member of the panel if any of the following is true:

(a) The individual is a current employee of any office, department, or agency of this state.

(b) The individual is a party to 1 or more contracts with the department and the compensation paid under those contracts represented more than 5% of the individual's annual gross revenue in any of the preceding 3 years.

(c) The individual is employed by an entity that is a party to 1 or more contracts with the department and the compensation paid to the individual's employer under these contracts represented more than 5% of the employer's annual gross revenue in any of the preceding 3 years.

(d) The individual was employed by the department within the preceding 3 years.

(4) An individual appointed to the panel serves for a term of 3 years and may be reappointed for 1 additional 3-year term. After serving 2 consecutive terms, the individual shall not be a member of the panel for a period of at least 2 years before being eligible to be appointed to the panel again. The terms for members first appointed must be staggered so that not more than 5 vacancies are scheduled to occur in a single year. Individuals appointed to the panel serve without compensation. However, members of the panel may be reimbursed for their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties as members of the panel.

(5) A vacancy on the panel shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

(6) The business that the panel may perform shall be conducted at a public meeting of the panel held in compliance with the open meetings act, 1976 PA 267, MCL 15.261 to 15.275.

(7) A person who submitted a response activity plan; remedial action plan; postclosure plan; a no further action report; a request for certificate of completion or documentation of due care compliance under this part; or an initial assessment report, final assessment report, closure report, or documentation of due care compliance under part 213 may appeal a decision made by the department regarding a dispute by submitting a petition to the director. However, an issue that was addressed as part of the final decision of the director under section 21332 or that is the subject of a contested case hearing under section 21332 is not eligible for review by the panel. The petition must include the issues in dispute, the relevant facts upon which the dispute is based, factual data, analysis, opinion, and supporting documentation for the petitioner's position. The petitioner shall also submit a fee of \$3,500.00. If the director believes that the dispute may be able to be resolved without convening the panel, the director may contact the petitioner regarding the issues in dispute and may negotiate a resolution of the dispute. This negotiation period must not exceed 45 days. If the dispute is resolved without convening the panel, any fee that is submitted with the petition shall be returned.

(8) If a dispute is not resolved pursuant to subsection (7), the director shall schedule a meeting of 5 members of the panel, selected on the basis of their relevant expertise, within 45 days after receiving the original petition. If the dispute involves an underground storage tank system, at least 3 of the members selected must have relevant experience in the American Society for Testing and Materials risk-based corrective action processes described in part 213. A member selected for the dispute resolution process shall agree not to accept employment by the person bringing the dispute before the panel, or to undertake any employment concerning the facility in question for a period of 1 year after the decision has been rendered on the matter if that employment would represent more than 5% of the member's gross revenue in any of the preceding 3 years. The director shall provide a copy of all supporting documentation to members of the panel who will hear the dispute. An alternative member may be selected by the director to replace a member who is

unable to participate in the dispute resolution process. Any action by the members selected to hear the dispute requires a majority of the votes cast. The members selected for the dispute resolution process shall elect a chairperson of the dispute resolution process. At a meeting scheduled to hear the dispute, representatives of the petitioner and the department must each be afforded an opportunity to present their positions to the panel. The fee that is received by the director along with the petition shall be forwarded to the state treasurer for deposit into the fund.

(9) Within 45 days after hearing the dispute, the members of the panel who were selected for and participated in the dispute resolution process shall make a recommendation regarding the petition and provide written notice of the recommendation to the director of the department and the petitioner. The written recommendation must include the specific scientific or technical rationale for the recommendation. The panel's recommendation regarding the petition may be to adopt, modify, or reverse, in whole or in part, the department's decision that is the subject of the petition. If the panel does not make its recommendation within this 45-day time period, the decision of the department is the final decision of the director.

(10) Within 60 days after receiving written notice of the panel's recommendation, the director shall issue a final decision, in writing, regarding the petition. However, this time period may be extended by written agreement between the director and the petitioner. If the director agrees with the recommendation of the panel, the department shall incorporate the recommendation into its response to the response activity plan, no further action report, request for certificate of completion, initial assessment report, final assessment report, closure report, or documentation of due care compliance. If the director rejects the recommendation of the panel, the director shall issue a written decision to the petitioner with a specific rationale for rejecting the recommendation of the panel. If the director fails to issue a final decision within the time period provided for in this subsection, the recommendation of the panel shall be considered the final decision of the director. The final decision of the director under this subsection is subject to review pursuant to section 631 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.631.

(11) Upon request of the director, the panel shall make a recommendation to the department on whether a member should be removed from the panel for noncompliance with this part. Prior to making this recommendation, the panel may convene a peer review panel to evaluate the conduct of the member.

(12) A member of the panel shall not participate in the dispute resolution process for any appeal in which that member has a conflict of interest. The director shall select a member of the panel to replace a member who has a conflict of interest under this subsection. For purposes of this subsection, a member has a conflict of interest if a petitioner has hired that member or the member's employer on any environmental matter within the preceding 3 years.

(13) As used in this section:

(a) "Dispute" means any disagreement over a technical, scientific, or administrative issue, including, but not limited to, disagreements over assessment of risk, response activity plans, remedial action plans, no further action reports, certificates of completion, documentation of due care compliance under this part, determinations of whether a person has submitted sufficient information for the department to make a decision regarding a submittal under this part or part 213, and initial assessment reports, final assessment reports, closure reports, postclosure plans, and documentations of due care compliance under part 213.

(b) "Relevant experience" means active participation in the preparation, design, implementation, and assessment of remedial investigations, feasibility studies, interim response activities, and remedial actions under this part or experience in the American society for testing and materials risk-based corrective action processes described in part 213. This experience must demonstrate the exercise of sound professional judgment and knowledge of the requirements of this part or part 213, or both.

**History:** Add. 2010, Act 227, Imd. Eff. Dec. 14, 2010;—Am. 2012, Act 109, Imd. Eff. May 1, 2012;—Am. 2012, Act 446, Imd. Eff. Dec. 27, 2012;—Am. 2014, Act 178, Eff. Sept. 16, 2014;—Am. 2018, Act 581, Imd. Eff. Dec. 28, 2018.

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**Popular name:** Hazardous Waste Act

**Popular name:** NREPA