

**Progress Report of Adoption or Amendment of
On-Site Wastewater Rules**

Session Law 2015-286



Report to

The Environmental Review Commission

and

**The Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and
Human Services**

By

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

On Behalf of the Commission for Public Health

July 1, 2016

BACKGROUND

Session Law (S.L.) 2015-286, Section 4.15.(c) requires reporting of progress by the Commission for Public Health to the Environmental Review Commission and the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services beginning January 1, 2016, and every quarter thereafter, until all rules required pursuant to S.L. 2015-286 Sections 4.14 and 4.15 are adopted or amended.

This report is submitted by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Division of Public Health on behalf of the Commission for Public Health. This report reflects the progress on adoption or amendment of the rules referenced in the legislation's Section 4.14 (**Part 1 of the report**) and the rulemaking specifications described in S.L. 2015-286, Section 4.15 (**Part 2 of the report**). The legislation addresses rules governing on-site wastewater systems, including a new "engineered option permit", or EOP, for on-site wastewater systems. General details of the relevant sections and sub-sections are provided below followed by a description of the collective status of related rulemaking efforts and projected next steps.

PART 1: SESSION LAW 2015-286, SECTION 4.14

S.L. 286, Section 4.14.(k) requires the Commission for Public Health to adopt temporary rules pursuant to Sections 4.14.(a) through 4.14.(e), Section 4.14.(g), and Section 4.14.(j) no later than June 1, 2016. The legislation also requires the adoption of permanent rules no later than January 1, 2017. The statutory changes in these Sections and associated rule-making status are summarized below:

Section 4.14.(a) addresses amendments to General Statute (GS) 130A-334 in the form of additional terms and definitions related specifically to the Engineered Option Permit (EOP) established in Section 4.14.(c) of the Session Law.

- The draft temporary Rule for the EOP that is in process for adoption satisfies the requirement for temporary rulemaking.
- The ongoing complete revision of 15A NCAC 18A .1900 that is in process will satisfy the requirement for permanent rule adoption.

Section 4.14.(b) addresses amendments to GS 130A-335 primarily related to the EOP, including specification of required licensure for private sector professionals who may perform site evaluations in addition to Local Health Department (LHD) personnel. Also requires rules adopted by the Commission implementing the EOP to be at least as stringent as existing Commission rules for on-site wastewater systems.

- The draft temporary Rule for the EOP that is in process for adoption satisfies the requirement for temporary rulemaking.
- The ongoing complete revision of 15A NCAC 18A .1900 that is in process will satisfy the requirement for permanent rule adoption.

Section 4.14.(c) addresses amendment to Article 11 of Chapter 130A of the General Statutes with the addition of a new section, G.S.130A-336.1 *Alternative process for wastewater system approvals* (which establishes the EOP).

- The draft temporary Rule for the EOP that is in process for adoption satisfies the requirement for temporary rulemaking.
- The ongoing complete revision of 15A NCAC 18A .1900 that is in process will satisfy the requirement for permanent rule adoption.

Section 4.14.(d) addresses amendments to G.S.130A-338 for the EOP as it affects issuance of construction permits by building code enforcement officials.

- Both temporary and permanent rule changes are required by this section. However, this statutory change stands alone and thus does not necessitate rule revision.

Section 4.14.(e) addresses amendments to G.S.130A-339 for the EOP as it affects allowance of permanent electrical service by building code enforcement officials.

- Both temporary and permanent rule changes are required by this section. However, this statutory change stands alone and thus does not necessitate rule revision.

Section 4.14.(g) addresses amendments to G.S.130A-336 for the EOP including: Specification of required licensure for private sector professionals who may perform site evaluations in addition to Local Health Department (LHD) personnel; no effect on validity of permits upon change of property ownership; and requirement that Local Health Departments act on applications within a specified period of time or risk losing public health funding.

- The draft temporary Rule for the EOP that is in process for adoption satisfies the requirement for temporary rulemaking.
- The ongoing complete revision of 15A NCAC 18A .1900 that is in process will satisfy the requirement for permanent rule adoption.

Section 4.14.(j) addresses amendments to G.S. 130A-342 described in the Session Law regarding Operator Certification requirements for residential wastewater treatment systems approved under NSF-International Standard 40 (*NSF International is the nationally recognized certification and testing organization that has developed Standard 40 which is widely accepted as a basis for approving proprietary wastewater treatment systems. The North Carolina General Assembly first recognized the applicability of NSF Standard 40 by its initial adoption of G.S. 130A-342 in 1989*).

- Both temporary and permanent rule changes are technically required.
- However, this statutory change stands alone and thus does not necessitate rule revision.

Current Status of Activities pursuant to Section 4.14

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' On-Site Water Protection (OSWP) staff has drafted a temporary rule for the Engineered Option Permit (EOP). The Commission for Public Health adopted the EOP temporary rule at their meeting on May 11, 2016. The Rules Review Commission meeting for the EOP temporary rule was June 16, 2016, and the Rules Review Commission approved the temporary rule. The effective date for the temporary rule is July 1, 2016.

Next Steps for Implementation of Section 4.14

- OSWP staff will continue the temporary rule process for the EOP as expeditiously as allowed under the Administrative Procedures Act.
- The temporary EOP rule is part of the permanent rule rewrite OSWP staff are working on. The effective date for the permanent EOP rule, as part of the permanent rule rewrite, is January 1, 2017.

PART 2: SESSION LAW 2015-286, SECTION 4.15

Sections slated for Permanent Rules only (due January 1, 2017) are:

- **Section 4.15.(a)** – Amendments to G.S.130A-343 regarding approval of on-site wastewater systems.
- **Section 4.15.(b)** – Implementation of Section 4.15.(a).

Current Status of Activities around Section 4.15

- OSWP staff met and reviewed all comments received regarding the draft rules.
- OSWP staff updated and reorganized the draft rules based on the comments received from the public and private sector individuals and stakeholder groups. The updated draft was sent out May 31, 2016 to all public and private stakeholders.

Next Steps for Implementation of Section 4.15

- OSWP staff will continue to receive comments from stakeholders and will document a response to each comment.
- OSWP staff will proceed with the rule revision process in conjunction with DHHS Division of Public Health staff.