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**SENATE BILL 5091**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2017 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Takko, Rivers, and Wellman; by request of Utilities & Transportation Commission

AN ACT Relating to removing expiration dates, obsolete dates, and an outdated statutory reference from the enforcement provisions of the underground utility damage prevention act; and amending RCW 19.122.130, 19.122.140, and 19.122.150.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 19.122.130 and 2012 c 96 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) ((~~By January 1, 2013,~~)) The commission must contract with a statewide, nonprofit entity whose purpose is to reduce damages to underground and above ground facilities, promote safe excavation practices, and review complaints of alleged violations of this chapter. The contract must not obligate funding by the commission for activities performed by the nonprofit entity or the safety committee under this section((~~, and is therefore exempt under RCW 39.29.040(1) from the requirements of chapter 39.29 RCW~~)).

(2) ((~~By January 1, 2013,~~)) The contracting entity must create a safety committee to:

(a) Advise the commission and other state agencies, the legislature, and local governments on best practices and training to prevent damage to underground utilities, and policies to enhance worker and public safety; and

(b) Review complaints alleging violations of this chapter involving practices related to underground facilities.

(3)(a) The safety committee will consist of thirteen members, who must be nominated by represented groups and appointed by the contracting entity to staggered three-year terms. ((~~By January 1, 2013,~~)) The safety committee must include representatives of:

(i) Local governments;

(ii) A natural gas utility subject to regulation under Titles 80 and 81 RCW;

(iii) Contractors;

(iv) Excavators;

(v) An electric utility subject to regulation under Title 80 RCW;

(vi) A consumer-owned utility, as defined in RCW 19.27A.140;

(vii) A pipeline company;

(viii) The insurance industry;

(ix) The commission; and

(x) A telecommunications company.

(b) ((~~By January 1, 2013,~~)) The safety committee may pass bylaws and provide for those organizational processes that are necessary to complete the safety committee's tasks.

(4) The safety committee must meet at least once every three months.

(5) ((~~After January 1, 2013,~~)) The safety committee may review complaints of alleged violations of this chapter involving practices related to underground facilities. Any person may bring a complaint to the safety committee regarding an alleged violation occurring on or after January 1, 2013.

(6) To review complaints of alleged violations, the safety committee must appoint at least three and not more than five members as a review committee. The review committee must include the same number of members representing excavators and facility operators. One member representing facility operators must also be a representative of a pipeline company or a natural gas utility subject to regulation under Titles 80 and 81 RCW. The review committee must also include a member representing the insurance industry.

(7) Before reviewing a complaint alleging a violation of this chapter, the review committee must notify the person making the complaint and the alleged violator of its review and of the opportunity to participate.

(8) ((~~After January 1, 2013,~~)) The safety committee may provide written notification to the commission, with supporting documentation, that a person has likely committed a violation of this chapter, and recommend remedial action that may include a penalty amount, training, or education to improve public safety, or some combination thereof.

((~~(9) This section expires December 31, 2020.~~))

**Sec.**  RCW 19.122.140 and 2011 c 263 s 19 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The commission may enforce the civil penalties authorized in RCW 19.122.070 or 19.122.075 when it receives written notification from the safety committee created under RCW 19.122.130 indicating that a violation of this chapter has likely been committed by a person subject to regulation by the commission, or involving the underground facilities of such a person.

(2) If the commission receives written notification from the safety committee pursuant to RCW 19.122.130 that a violation of this chapter has likely been committed by a person who is not subject to regulation by the commission, and in which the underground facility involved is also not subject to regulation by the commission, the commission may refer the matter to the attorney general for enforcement of a civil penalty under RCW 19.122.070 or 19.122.075. The commission must provide funding for such enforcement. However, any costs and fees recovered by the attorney general pursuant to subsection (3) of this section must be deposited by the commission in the fund that paid for such enforcement.

(3) In a matter referred to it by the commission pursuant to subsection (2) of this section, the attorney general may bring an action to enforce the penalties authorized in RCW 19.122.070 or 19.122.075. In such an action, the court may award the state all costs of investigation and trial, including a reasonable attorneys' fee fixed by the court.

((~~(4) This section expires December 31, 2020.~~))

**Sec.**  RCW 19.122.150 and 2011 c 263 s 21 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The commission may investigate and enforce violations of RCW 19.122.055, 19.122.075, and 19.122.090 relating to pipeline facilities without initial referral to the safety committee created under RCW 19.122.130.

(2) If the commission's investigation of notifications received pursuant to RCW 19.122.140 or subsection (1) of this section substantiates violations of this chapter, the commission may impose penalties authorized by RCW 19.122.055, 19.122.070, 19.122.075, and 19.122.090, and require training, education, or any combination thereof.

(3) With respect to referrals from the safety committee, the commission must consider any recommendation by the committee regarding enforcement and remedial actions involving an alleged violator.

(4) In an action to impose a penalty initiated by the commission under subsection (1) or (2) of this section, the penalty is due and payable when the person incurring the penalty receives a notice of penalty in writing from the commission describing the violation and advising the person that the penalty is due. The person incurring the penalty has fifteen days from the date the person receives the notice of penalty to file with the commission a request for mitigation or a request for a hearing. The commission must include this time limit information in the notice of penalty. After receiving a timely request for mitigation or hearing, the commission must suspend collection of the penalty until it issues a final order concerning the penalty or mitigation of that penalty. A person aggrieved by the commission's final order may seek judicial review, subject to provisions of the administrative procedure act, chapter 34.05 RCW.

(5) If a penalty imposed by the commission is not paid, the attorney general may, on the commission's behalf, file a civil action in superior court to collect the penalty.

((~~(6) This section expires December 31, 2020.~~))

**--- END ---**