

§ 60128. Dumping within pipeline rights-of-way

(a) PROHIBITION.—No person shall excavate for the purpose of unauthorized disposal within the right-of-way of an interstate gas pipeline facility or interstate hazardous liquid pipeline facility, or any other limited area in the vicinity of any such interstate pipeline facility established by the Secretary of Transportation, and dispose solid waste therein.

(b) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this section, the term “solid waste” has the meaning given that term in section 1004(27) of the Solid Waste Disposal Act (42 U.S.C. 6903(27)).

(Added Pub. L. 104-304, §18(a), Oct. 12, 1996, 110 Stat. 3804.)

§ 60129. Protection of employees providing pipeline safety information

(a) DISCRIMINATION AGAINST EMPLOYEE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—No employer may discharge any employee or otherwise discriminate against any current or former employee with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment because the employee (or any person acting pursuant to a request of the employee)—

(A) provided, caused to be provided, or is about to provide or cause to be provided, to the employer or the Federal Government information relating to any violation or alleged violation of any order, regulation, or standard under this chapter or any other Federal law relating to pipeline safety;

(B) refused to engage in any practice made unlawful by this chapter or any other Federal law relating to pipeline safety, if the employee has identified the alleged illegality to the employer;

(C) provided, caused to be provided, or is about to provide or cause to be provided, testimony before Congress or at any Federal or State proceeding regarding any provision (or proposed provision) of this chapter or any other Federal law relating to pipeline safety;

(D) commenced, caused to be commenced, or is about to commence or cause to be commenced a proceeding under this chapter or any other Federal law relating to pipeline safety, or a proceeding for the administration or enforcement of any requirement imposed under this chapter or any other Federal law relating to pipeline safety;

(E) provided, caused to be provided, or is about to provide or cause to be provided, testimony in any proceeding described in subparagraph (D); or

(F) assisted or participated or is about to assist or participate in any manner in such a proceeding or in any other action to carry out the purposes of this chapter or any other Federal law relating to pipeline safety.

(2) EMPLOYER DEFINED.—In this section, the term “employer” means—

(A) a person owning or operating a pipeline facility; or

(B) a contractor or subcontractor of such a person.

(b) DEPARTMENT OF LABOR COMPLAINT PROCEDURE.—

(1) FILING AND NOTIFICATION.—A person who believes that he or she has been discharged or otherwise discriminated against by any person in violation of subsection (a) may, not later than 180 days after the date on which such violation occurs, file (or have any person file on his or her behalf) a complaint with the Secretary of Labor alleging such discharge or discrimination. Upon receipt of such a complaint, the Secretary of Labor shall notify, in writing, the person or persons named in the complaint and the Secretary of Transportation of the filing of the complaint, of the allegations contained in the complaint, of the substance of evidence supporting the complaint, and of the opportunities that will be afforded to such person or persons under paragraph (2).

(2) INVESTIGATION; PRELIMINARY ORDER.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the date of receipt of a complaint filed under paragraph (1) and after affording the person or persons named in the complaint an opportunity to submit to the Secretary of Labor a written response to the complaint and an opportunity to meet with a representative of the Secretary of Labor to present statements from witnesses, the Secretary of Labor shall conduct an investigation and determine whether there is reasonable cause to believe that the complaint has merit and notify in writing the complainant and the person or persons alleged to have committed a violation of subsection (a) of the Secretary of Labor’s findings. If the Secretary of Labor concludes that there is reasonable cause to believe that a violation of subsection (a) has occurred, the Secretary of Labor shall include with the Secretary of Labor’s findings with a preliminary order providing the relief prescribed by paragraph (3)(B). Not later than 60 days after the date of notification of findings under this subparagraph, any person alleged to have committed a violation or the complainant may file objections to the findings or preliminary order, or both, and request a hearing on the record. The filing of such objections shall not operate to stay any reinstatement remedy contained in the preliminary order. Such hearings shall be conducted expeditiously. If a hearing is not requested in such 60-day period, the preliminary order shall be deemed a final order that is not subject to judicial review.

(B) REQUIREMENTS.—

(i) REQUIRED SHOWING BY COMPLAINANT.—The Secretary of Labor shall dismiss a complaint filed under this subsection and shall not conduct an investigation otherwise required under subparagraph (A) unless the complainant makes a prima facie showing that any behavior described in subsection (a) was a contributing factor in the unfavorable personnel action alleged in the complaint.

(ii) SHOWING BY EMPLOYER.—Notwithstanding a finding by the Secretary of Labor that the complainant has made the showing required under clause (i), no investigation otherwise required under subparagraph (A) shall be conducted if the

employer demonstrates, by clear and convincing evidence, that the employer would have taken the same unfavorable personnel action in the absence of that behavior.

(iii) **CRITERIA FOR DETERMINATION BY SECRETARY.**—The Secretary of Labor may determine that a violation of subsection (a) has occurred only if the complainant demonstrates that any behavior described in subsection (a) was a contributing factor in the unfavorable personnel action alleged in the complaint.

(iv) **PROHIBITION.**—Relief may not be ordered under subparagraph (A) if the employer demonstrates by clear and convincing evidence that the employer would have taken the same unfavorable personnel action in the absence of that behavior.

(3) **FINAL ORDER.**—

(A) **DEADLINE FOR ISSUANCE; SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS.**—Not later than 90 days after the date of conclusion of a hearing under paragraph (2), the Secretary of Labor shall issue a final order providing the relief prescribed by this paragraph or denying the complaint. At any time before issuance of a final order, a proceeding under this subsection may be terminated on the basis of a settlement agreement entered into by the Secretary of Labor, the complainant, and the person or persons alleged to have committed the violation.

(B) **REMEDY.**—If, in response to a complaint filed under paragraph (1), the Secretary of Labor determines that a violation of subsection (a) has occurred, the Secretary of Labor shall order the person or persons who committed such violation to—

(i) take affirmative action to abate the violation;

(ii) reinstate the complainant to his or her former position together with the compensation (including back pay) and restore the terms, conditions, and privileges associated with his or her employment; and

(iii) provide compensatory damages to the complainant.

If such an order is issued under this paragraph, the Secretary of Labor, at the request of the complainant, shall assess against the person or persons against whom the order is issued a sum equal to the aggregate amount of all costs and expenses (including attorney's and expert witness fees) reasonably incurred, as determined by the Secretary of Labor, by the complainant for, or in connection with, the bringing the complaint upon which the order was issued.

(C) **FRIVOLOUS COMPLAINTS.**—If the Secretary of Labor finds that a complaint under paragraph (1) is frivolous or has been brought in bad faith, the Secretary of Labor may award to the prevailing employer a reasonable attorney's fee not exceeding \$1,000.

(D) **DE NOVO REVIEW.**—

(i) **IN GENERAL.**—With respect to a complaint under paragraph (1), if the Secretary of Labor has not issued a final deci-

sion by the date that is 210 days after the date on which the complaint was filed, and if the delay is not due to the bad faith of the employee who filed the complaint, that employee may bring an original action at law or equity for de novo review in the appropriate district court of the United States, which shall have jurisdiction over such action without regard to the amount in controversy, and which action shall, at the request of either party to the action, be tried by the court with a jury.

(ii) **BURDENS OF PROOF.**—An original action described in clause (i) shall be governed by the same legal burdens of proof specified in paragraph (2)(B) for review by the Secretary of Labor.

(4) **REVIEW.**—

(A) **APPEAL TO COURT OF APPEALS.**—Any person adversely affected or aggrieved by an order issued under paragraph (3) may obtain review of the order in the United States Court of Appeals for the circuit in which the violation, with respect to which the order was issued, allegedly occurred or the circuit in which the complainant resided on the date of such violation. The petition for review must be filed not later than 60 days after the date of issuance of the final order of the Secretary of Labor. Review shall conform to chapter 7 of title 5, United States Code. The commencement of proceedings under this subparagraph shall not, unless ordered by the court, operate as a stay of the order.

(B) **LIMITATION ON COLLATERAL ATTACK.**—An order of the Secretary of Labor with respect to which review could have been obtained under subparagraph (A) shall not be subject to judicial review in any criminal or other civil proceeding.

(5) **ENFORCEMENT OF ORDER BY SECRETARY OF LABOR.**—Whenever any person has failed to comply with an order issued under paragraph (3), the Secretary of Labor may file a civil action in the United States district court for the district in which the violation was found to occur to enforce such order. In actions brought under this paragraph, the district courts shall have jurisdiction to grant all appropriate relief, including, but not to be limited to, injunctive relief and compensatory damages.

(6) **ENFORCEMENT OF ORDER BY PARTIES.**—

(A) **COMMENCEMENT OF ACTION.**—A person on whose behalf an order was issued under paragraph (3) may commence a civil action against the person or persons to whom such order was issued to require compliance with such order. The appropriate United States district court shall have jurisdiction, without regard to the amount in controversy or the citizenship of the parties, to enforce such order.

(B) **ATTORNEY FEES.**—The court, in issuing any final order under this paragraph, may award costs of litigation (including reasonable attorney and expert witness fees) to any party whenever the court determines such award of costs is appropriate.

(c) **MANDAMUS.**—Any nondiscretionary duty imposed by this section shall be enforceable in a mandamus proceeding brought under section 1361 of title 28, United States Code.

(d) **NONAPPLICABILITY TO DELIBERATE VIOLATIONS.**—Subsection (a) shall not apply with respect to an action of an employee of an employer who, acting without direction from the employer (or such employer's agent), deliberately causes a violation of any requirement relating to pipeline safety under this chapter or any other law of the United States.

(e) **NONENFORCEABILITY OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS WAIVING RIGHTS AND REMEDIES OR REQUIRING ARBITRATION OF DISPUTES.**—

(1) **WAIVER OF RIGHTS AND REMEDIES.**—The rights and remedies provided under this section may not be waived by any agreement, policy, form, or condition of employment, including by a predispute arbitration agreement.

(2) **PREDISPUTE ARBITRATION AGREEMENTS.**—No provision of a predispute arbitration agreement shall be valid or enforceable if the provision requires arbitration of a dispute arising under subsection (a)(1).

(Added Pub. L. 107-355, §6(a), Dec. 17, 2002, 116 Stat. 2989; amended Pub. L. 116-260, div. R, title I, §116, Dec. 27, 2020, 134 Stat. 2233.)

AMENDMENTS

2020—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 116-260, §116(1), substituted “current or former employee with” for “employee with” in introductory provisions.

Subsec. (b)(3)(D). Pub. L. 116-260, §116(2), added subpar. (D).

Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 116-260, §116(3), added subsec. (e).

§ 60130. Pipeline safety information grants to communities

(a) **GRANT AUTHORITY.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Transportation may make grants for technical assistance to local communities, Indian Tribes, and groups of individuals (not including for-profit entities) relating to the safety of pipeline facilities in local communities, other than facilities regulated under Public Law 93-153 (43 U.S.C. 1651 et seq.). No grants may be awarded under section 60114(g) until the Secretary has established competitive procedures for awarding grants under this section and criteria for selecting grant recipients. Except as provided in subsection (c)(2), the amount of any grant under this section may not exceed \$100,000 for a single grant recipient. The Secretary shall establish appropriate procedures to ensure the proper use of funds provided under this section.

(2) **DEMONSTRATION GRANTS.**—At least the first 3 grants awarded under this section shall be demonstration grants for the purpose of demonstrating and evaluating the utility of grants under this section. Each such demonstration grant shall not exceed \$25,000.

(3) **DISSEMINATION OF TECHNICAL FINDINGS.**—Each recipient of a grant under this section shall ensure that—

(A) the technical findings made possible by the grants are made available to the relevant operators; and

(B) open communication between the grant recipients, local operators, local com-

munities, and other interested parties is encouraged.

(b) **PROHIBITED USES.**—Funds provided under this section to grant recipients and their contractors may not be used for lobbying, for direct advocacy for or against a pipeline construction or expansion project, or in direct support of litigation.

(c) **FUNDING.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Subject to paragraph (2), out of amounts made available under section 2(b) of the PIPES Act of 2016 (Public Law 114-183; 130 Stat. 515), the Secretary shall use \$2,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2021 through 2023 to carry out this section.

(2) **IMPROVING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.**—From the amounts used to carry out this section under paragraph (1) each fiscal year, the Secretary shall award \$1,000,000 to an eligible applicant through a competitive selection process for the purpose of improving the quality of technical assistance provided to communities or individuals under this section.

(3) **LIMITATION.**—Any amounts used to carry out this section shall not be derived from user fees collected under section 60301.

(d) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.**—The term “technical assistance” means engineering, research, and other scientific analysis of pipeline safety issues, including the promotion of public participation on technical pipeline safety issues in proceedings related to this chapter.

(2) **ELIGIBLE APPLICANT.**—The term “eligible applicant” means a nonprofit entity that—

(A) is a public safety advocate;

(B) has pipeline safety expertise;

(C) is able to provide individuals and communities with technical assistance; and

(D) was established with funds designated for the purpose of community service through the implementation of section 3553 of title 18 relating to violations of this chapter.

(Added Pub. L. 107-355, §9(a), Dec. 17, 2002, 116 Stat. 2994; amended Pub. L. 109-468, §5, Dec. 29, 2006, 120 Stat. 3490; Pub. L. 112-90, §32(e), Jan. 3, 2012, 125 Stat. 1923; Pub. L. 113-188, title XV, §1501(c), Nov. 26, 2014, 128 Stat. 2024; Pub. L. 114-183, §§2(d), 20(a), June 22, 2016, 130 Stat. 516, 527; Pub. L. 116-260, div. R, title I, §101(e), Dec. 27, 2020, 134 Stat. 2213.)

Editorial Notes

REFERENCES IN TEXT

Public Law 93-153, referred to in subsec. (a)(1), is Pub. L. 93-153, Nov. 16, 1973, 87 Stat. 576. Title II of the Act, known as the Trans-Alaska Pipeline Authorization Act, is classified generally to chapter 34 (§1651 et seq.) of Title 43, Public Lands. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 1651 of Title 43 and Tables.

Section 2(b) of the PIPES Act of 2016, referred to in subsec. (c)(1), is section 2(b) of Pub. L. 114-183, June 22, 2016, 130 Stat. 515, which is not classified to the Code.

AMENDMENTS

2020—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 116-260, §101(e)(1)(A), substituted “to local communities, Indian Tribes, and groups of individuals (not including for-profit enti-