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AB-3007 California Environmental Quality Act: record of environmental documents: format. (2023-2024)

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Assembly Bill No. 3007

CHAPTER 583

An act to amend Section 711.4 of the Fish and Game Code, relating to environmental quality.

[Approved by Governor September 25, 2024. Filed with Secretary of State September 25, 2024.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 3007, Hoover. California Environmental Quality Act: record of environmental documents: format.

Existing law requires project applicants and public agencies subject to the California Environmental Quality Act to pay a filing fee to the Department of Fish and Wildlife for each proposed project for the purpose of defraying the costs of managing and protecting fish and wildlife trust resources, as specified. Existing law specifies the required filing fees and provides that a filing fee is not required to be paid if specified conditions exist. Existing law also authorizes a county clerk to charge a documentary handling fee of \$50 per filing in addition to the filing fee, and requires the county clerk of each county and the Office of Planning and Research to maintain a record, both electronic and in paper, of all environmental documents received, as specified.

This bill would instead require the county clerk of each county and the Office of Planning and Research to maintain the record electronically and authorize the county clerk of each county and the office to maintain the record on paper.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 711.4 of the Fish and Game Code is amended to read:

711.4. (a) The department shall impose and collect a filing fee in the amount prescribed in subdivision (d) to defray the costs of managing and protecting fish and wildlife trust resources, including, but not limited to, consulting with other public agencies, reviewing environmental documents, recommending mitigation measures, developing monitoring requirements for purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000) of the Public Resources Code), consulting pursuant to Section 21104.2 of the Public Resources Code, and other activities protecting those trust resources identified in the review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

(b) The filing fees shall be proportional to the cost incurred by the department and shall be annually reviewed and adjustments recommended to the Legislature in an amount necessary to pay the full costs of department programs as specified. The department shall annually adjust the fees pursuant to Section 713.

(c) (1) All project applicants and public agencies subject to the California Environmental Quality Act shall pay a filing fee for each proposed project, as specified in subdivision (d).

(2) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), a filing fee shall not be paid pursuant to this section if any of the following conditions exist:

(A) The project has no effect on fish and wildlife.

(B) The project is being undertaken by the department.

(C) The project costs are payable by the department from any of the following sources that are held by the department:

(i) The Public Resources Account in the Cigarette and Tobacco Products Surtax Fund.

(ii) The California Wildlife, Coastal, and Park Land Conservation Fund of 1988.

(iii) The Habitat Conservation Fund.

(iv) The Fisheries Restoration Account in the Fish and Game Preservation Fund.

(v) The Commercial Salmon Stamp Dedicated Subaccount in the Fish and Game Preservation Fund.

(vi) The California Ocean Resource Enhancement Account.

(D) The project is implemented by the department through a contract with either a nonprofit entity or a local government agency.

(3) Filing fees shall be paid at the time and in the amount specified in subdivision (d). Notwithstanding Sections 21080.5 and 21081 of the Public Resources Code, a project shall not be operative, vested, or final, and local government permits for the project shall not be valid, until the filing fees required pursuant to this section are paid.

(d) The fees shall be in the following amounts:

(1) For a project that is statutorily or categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act, including those certified regulatory programs that incorporate statutory and categorical exemptions, a filing fee shall not be paid.

(2) For a project for which a negative declaration is prepared pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 21080 of the Public Resources Code, the filing fee is one thousand eight hundred dollars (\$1,800). A local agency collecting the filing fee shall remit the fee to the county clerk at the time of filing a notice of determination pursuant to Section 21152 of the Public Resources Code. A state agency collecting the filing fee shall remit the fee to the Office of Planning and Research at the time of filing a notice of determination pursuant to Section 21108 of the Public Resources Code.

(3) For a project with an environmental impact report prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, the filing fee is two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500). A local agency collecting the filing fee shall remit the fee to the county clerk at the time of filing a notice of determination pursuant to Section 21152 of the Public Resources Code. A state agency collecting the filing fee shall remit the fee to the Office of Planning and Research at the time of filing a notice of determination pursuant to Section 21108 of the Public Resources Code.

(4) For a project that is subject to a certified regulatory program pursuant to Section 21080.5 of the Public Resources Code, the filing fee is eight hundred fifty dollars (\$850). The filing fee shall be paid to the department before the filing of the notice of determination pursuant to Section 21080.5 of the Public Resources Code.

(e) The county clerk may charge a documentary handling fee of fifty dollars (\$50) per filing in addition to the filing fee specified in subdivision (d).

(1) The county clerk of each county and the Office of Planning and Research shall maintain a record electronically, and may maintain the record on paper, of all environmental documents received. The record shall include, for each environmental document received, the name of each applicant or lead agency, the document filing number, the project name as approved by the lead agency, and the filing date. The record shall be made available for examination or audit by authorized personnel of the department during normal business hours.

(2) The filing fee imposed and collected pursuant to subdivision (d) shall be remitted monthly to the department within 30 days after the end of each month. The remittance shall be accompanied with the information required pursuant to paragraph (1). The amount of fees due shall be reported on forms prescribed and provided by the department.

(3) The department shall assess a penalty of 10 percent of the amount of fees due for a failure to remit the amount payable when due. The department may pursue collection of delinquent fees through the Controller's office pursuant to Section 12419.5 of the Government Code.

(f) Notwithstanding subdivision (a) of Section 12000, failure to pay the fee under subdivision (d) is not a misdemeanor. All unpaid fees are a statutory assessment subject to collection under procedures as provided in the Revenue and Taxation Code.

(g) Only one filing fee shall be paid for each project unless the project is tiered or phased, or separate environmental documents are required.

(h) This section does not preclude or modify the duty of the department to recommend, require, permit, or engage in mitigation activities pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

(i) The permit process of the California Coastal Commission, as certified by the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency, is exempt from the payment of the filing fees prescribed by paragraph (4) of subdivision (d) insofar as the permits are issued under any of the following regulations:

(1) Subchapter 4 (commencing with Section 13136) of Chapter 5 of Division 5.5 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations.

(2) Subchapter 1 (commencing with Section 13200), Subchapter 3 (commencing with Section 13213), Subchapter 4 (commencing with Section 13215), Subchapter 4.5 (commencing with Section 13238), Subchapter 5 (commencing with Section 13240), Subchapter 6 (commencing with Section 13250), and Subchapter 8 (commencing with Section 13255.0) of Chapter 6 of Division 5.5 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations.