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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE BILL

No. 2021 Session of  
2024

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INTRODUCED BY CONKLIN, MADDEN, SANCHEZ, N. NELSON AND HILL-  
EVANS, FEBRUARY 9, 2024

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND INDUSTRY, FEBRUARY 9, 2024

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AN ACT

1 Providing for the establishment of response teams relating to  
2 certain well operations and for the powers and duties of the  
3 Secretary of Labor and Industry.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Short title.

7 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Well  
8 Operation Response Team Act.

9 Section 2. Definitions.

10 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall  
11 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the  
12 context clearly indicates otherwise:

13 "Completion." The date on which a well involved is properly  
14 equipped for the production of oil or gas, goes into production  
15 or, if a well is dry, the date on which the well is abandoned.

16 "Department." The Department of Labor and Industry of the  
17 Commonwealth.

18 "Drilling." The term includes the drilling or re-drilling of

1 a well or the deepening or expansion of an existing well.

2 "Exploration." A drilling effort to obtain information  
3 relating to oil or gas extraction without the intent of  
4 immediate production.

5 "Operator." An individual or entity that locates, drills,  
6 operates, alters, directs, controls, supervises, maintains,  
7 plugs or abandons a well or reconditions a well with the purpose  
8 of production.

9 "Production." The retrieval of oil or gas from a well.

10 "Response team." A team of individuals established by an  
11 operator in accordance with this act, the members of which, at a  
12 minimum:

13 (1) Are familiar with the operations and equipment of a  
14 well.

15 (2) Participate at least annually in response training  
16 at a minimum of one well that is operated by the operator and  
17 covered by the response team.

18 (3) Are trained in basic first aid and CPR on an annual  
19 basis.

20 (4) Will be available with respect to the well involved  
21 no later than one hour by ground travel time after requested.

22 "Secretary." The Secretary of Labor and Industry of the  
23 Commonwealth.

24 "Well." A bore hole drilled or being drilled onshore for the  
25 purpose of, or to be used for, producing, extracting or  
26 injecting any gas, petroleum or other liquid related to oil or  
27 gas production or storage, including a hole drilled or being  
28 drilled for exploration. The term does not include a hole that  
29 has been plugged and abandoned.

30 Section 3. Response team regulations.

1 (a) General rule.--No later than 18 months after the  
2 effective date of this section, the secretary shall promulgate  
3 regulations, in accordance with this section, relating to  
4 response teams.

5 (b) Requirements.--Regulations promulgated under subsection  
6 (a) shall:

7 (1) Not be construed to waive operator training  
8 requirements applicable to existing response teams.

9 (2) Establish, subject to update every five years  
10 thereafter, criteria to certify the qualifications of  
11 response teams.

12 (3) Require that the operator of a well:

13 (i) During the exploration or drilling phase, or  
14 before the completion phase:

15 (A) Have an employee knowledgeable in responding  
16 to emergency situations that may arise at the well  
17 who is employed and present at the well at all times.

18 (B) Make available a certified response team.

19 (ii) During the production phase, make available a  
20 certified response team.

21 (4) Provide that an operator must select one of the  
22 following to satisfy the requirement of paragraph (3)(ii):

23 (i) A multiemployer composite response team that is  
24 made up of team members who are knowledgeable about the  
25 operations of the well and who train on an annual basis  
26 at the well:

27 (A) Which provides coverage for multiple  
28 operators that have team members which include at  
29 least two active employees from each of the  
30 operators.

1 (B) Which provides coverage for multiple wells  
2 owned by the same operator.

3 (C) Which is a State-sponsored response team  
4 that is composed of at least two active employees  
5 from each of the operators.

6 (ii) A commercial response team that is provided for  
7 through contract with a third-party vendor or a response  
8 team provided by another operator, if the team:

9 (A) Trains on a quarterly basis at a minimum of  
10 one well operated by the operator who contracted for  
11 the services of the commercial response team.

12 (B) Is knowledgeable about the operations of the  
13 wells that are covered under the contract for  
14 services.

15 (C) Is composed of individuals with a minimum of  
16 one year well experience that has occurred within the  
17 five-year period preceding their employment on the  
18 contract response team.

19 (iii) A State-sponsored response team made up of  
20 State employees.

21 (5) Require that an operator of a well:

22 (i) Within 15 minutes of the commencement of an  
23 emergency, contact local first responders to inform them  
24 of the emergency.

25 (ii) Within one hour of the commencement of an  
26 emergency, contact the department to inform it of the  
27 emergency.

28 (iii) Within one hour of the commencement of an  
29 emergency, contact a State response center.

30 (iv) Provide communication technology, within a

1 reasonable distance of the well, that enables the  
2 operator to comply with the regulations under this  
3 paragraph.

4 (6) Require that an operator provide annual training to  
5 local first responders responsible for serving the area of  
6 each well operated by the operator, who may be required to  
7 respond to an emergency situation, on the hazards of a well  
8 and proper emergency response techniques.

9 (7) Require that an operator file a report, on an annual  
10 basis, with the department that provides detailed information  
11 on the response team assigned to each well of the operator  
12 and affirmatively states that the operator is in compliance  
13 with this act and all regulations promulgated under this act.

14 Section 4. Effective date.

15 This act shall take effect in 60 days.