

479B.20 Land restoration standards.

1. The commission, pursuant to [chapter 17A](#), shall adopt rules establishing standards for the restoration of agricultural lands during and after pipeline or underground storage facility construction. In addition to the requirements of [section 17A.4](#), the commission shall distribute copies of the notice of intended action and opportunity for oral presentations to each county board of supervisors. Any county board of supervisors may, under the provisions of [chapter 17A](#), and subsequent to the rulemaking proceedings, petition under those provisions for additional rulemaking to establish standards for land restoration after pipeline construction within that county. Upon the request of the petitioning county, the commission shall schedule a hearing to consider the merits of the petition. Rules adopted under [this section](#) shall not apply to land located within city boundaries unless the land is used for agricultural purposes. Rules adopted under [this section](#) shall address, but are not limited to, all of the following subject matters:

- a. Topsoil separation and replacement.
- b. Temporary and permanent repair to drain tile.
- c. Removal of rocks and debris from the right-of-way.
- d. Restoration of areas of soil compaction.
- e. Restoration of terraces, waterways, and other erosion control structures.
- f. Revegetation of untilled land.
- g. Future installation of drain tile or soil conservation structures.
- h. Restoration of land slope and contour.
- i. Restoration of areas used for field entrances and temporary roads.
- j. Construction in wet conditions.
- k. Designation of a pipeline company point of contact for landowner inquiries or claims.

2. The county board of supervisors shall cause an on-site inspection for compliance with the standards adopted under [this section](#) to be performed at any pipeline construction project in the county. A licensed professional engineer familiar with the standards adopted under [this section](#) and registered under [chapter 542B](#) shall be responsible for the inspection. A county board of supervisors may contract for the services of a licensed professional engineer for the purposes of the inspection. The reasonable costs of the inspection shall be paid by the pipeline company.

3. If the inspector determines that there has been a violation of the standards adopted under [this section](#), of the land restoration plan, or of an independent agreement on land restoration or line location executed in accordance with [subsection 10](#), the inspector shall give oral notice, followed by written notice, to the pipeline company and the contractor operating for the pipeline company and order corrective action to be taken in compliance with the standards. The costs of the corrective action shall be borne by the contractor operating for the pipeline company.

4. An inspector shall adequately inspect underground improvements altered during construction of the pipeline. An inspection shall be conducted at the time of the replacement or repair of the underground improvements. An inspector shall be present on the site at all times at each phase and separate activity of the opening of the trench, the restoration of underground improvements, and backfilling. The pipeline company and its contractor shall keep an inspector continually informed of the work schedule and any schedule changes. If proper notice is given, construction shall not be delayed due to an inspector's failure to be present on the site.

5. If the pipeline company or its contractor does not comply with the requirements of [this section](#), with the land restoration plan or line location, or with an independent agreement on land restoration executed in accordance with [subsection 10](#), the county board of supervisors may petition the commission for an order requiring corrective action to be taken. In addition, the county board of supervisors may file a complaint with the commission seeking imposition of civil penalties under [section 479B.21](#).

6. The pipeline company shall allow landowners and the inspector to view the proposed center line of the pipeline prior to commencing trenching operations to ensure that construction takes place in its proper location.

7. An inspector may temporarily halt the construction if the construction is not in compliance with [this chapter](#) and the standards adopted pursuant to [this chapter](#), the land restoration plan, or the terms of an independent agreement with the pipeline company regarding land restoration or line location executed in accordance with [subsection 10](#), until the inspector consults with the supervisory personnel of the pipeline company.

8. The commission shall instruct inspectors appointed by the board of supervisors regarding the content of the statutes and rules and the inspectors' responsibility to require construction conforming with the standards provided by [this chapter](#).

9. Petitioners for a permit for pipeline construction shall file with the petition a written land restoration plan showing how the requirements of [this section](#), and of rules adopted pursuant to [this section](#), will be met. The company shall provide copies of the plan to all landowners of property that will be disturbed by the construction.

10. [This section](#) does not preclude the application of provisions for protecting or restoring property that are different than those prescribed in [this section](#), in rules adopted under [this section](#), or in the land restoration plan, if the alternative provisions are contained in agreements independently executed by the pipeline company and the landowner, and if the alternative provisions are not inconsistent with state law or with rules adopted by the commission. Independent agreements on land restoration or line location between the landowner and pipeline company shall be in writing and a copy provided to the county inspector.

11. For the purposes of [this section](#), “construction” includes the removal of a previously constructed pipeline.

12. The requirements of [this section](#) shall apply only to pipeline construction projects commenced on or after June 1, 1999.

[95 Acts, ch 192, §47; 99 Acts, ch 85, §7, 11; 2024 Acts, ch 1170, §369](#)