

## Legislative Update

Following is a Summary of legislation enacted at the 2018 Regular Legislative Session that revises the powers and duties of MDEQ.

House Bill 813 provides a mechanism to ensure that the Underground Storage Tank (UST) program is adequately funded to allow for a financially stable program to provide services such as operator training and oversight of soil contamination cleanups. The bill authorizes the creation of an advisory committee that will make recommendations to the Commission on Environmental Quality about the fees necessary for operation of the program.

Senate Bill 2485 will allow the department to act more efficiently by not mandating that public hearings be held for all permits associated with a municipal solid waste landfill. Previously, the department was required to hold hearings on all permits associated with a municipal solid waste landfill, including air and stormwater discharge permits, even if a hearing was not requested. Solid waste management permits are generally issued on a ten-year cycle and other permits for a landfill are on a five-year cycle. There have been many instances where public hearings were held on the secondary permits that no one attended. The revision to the law, effective July 1, will allow MDEQ to forego public hearings on the routine air and water permits when a hearing is not requested. The goal is to increase the efficiency of the permitting process and to save state resources by using staff time better. The changes will also make the secondary landfill permits consistent with all other industries and projects in Mississippi. Public hearings on solid waste management permits for landfills will continue to be conducted.

The Legislature authorized \$5 million in bonding authority to be used for the wastewater State Revolving Fund (SRF) program. The SRF funds provide low interest loans to municipalities, counties, and authorities for wastewater infrastructure projects. The state receives approximately \$5 in federal grant funds for every \$1 the state provides, which is obviously a great return on investment. The bond bill containing the SRF authorization is House Bill 1649.

If you have any questions regarding this Legislative Update, please contact Robbie Wilbur at 601-961-5277 or by email at [rwilbur@mdeq.ms.gov](mailto:rwilbur@mdeq.ms.gov)