



## **Reform of the Georgia Hazardous Site Response Act Voluntary Site Remediation Program (SB 78 and HB 248)**

The Hazardous Site Response Act (HSRA) was passed in 1992 and was based on similar programs in other states and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Over the 15 years since HSRA was enacted, many practical and costly lessons have been learned in Georgia and nationwide about site remediation requirements and their costs.

Accordingly, other states and USEPA have updated and modified their programs to make remediation requirements more pragmatic and more cost effective while protecting human health and the environment. That's what our proposal will do for Georgia's program...make it more cost effective while still being protective.

Owners of contaminated sites in Georgia are willing to step forward to fund and implement remediation of their sites. However, they are often discouraged by the complex and lengthy investigation and review process and the exaggerated costs as they attempt to meet the often unrealistically high cleanup standards under the current state-directed program.

Our proposed bill addresses this problem by establishing a Voluntary Remediation Program option that complements Georgia's current HSRA program but differs from it in two respects:

First, at the owner's expense, a registered professional conducts the necessary site investigations, designs the remediation, monitors the progress of the remediation and certifies compliance with achievable standards at the completion of the remediation. The resulting voluntary remediation report and compliance certification is submitted by the owner to EPD for concurrence based on evidence satisfactory to EPD that the certification is consistent with the requirements and standards of the voluntary remediation program.

Second, the risk-based cleanup criteria of the Voluntary Remediation Program are similar to the existing risk-based approach used in Georgia, but are tailored to each site and updated to be consistent with risk-based corrective action procedures used by other states and US EPA.

The GCC proposal is not a major change to the Hazardous Site Response Act itself, and it does not modify the process EPD uses for abandoned or orphan sites. Neither does it change the criteria or priorities for sites funded from the Hazardous Sites Trust Fund. It relates only to those sites for which the owners volunteer to remediate their sites in a timely manner and at their own expense. It does not conflict with the basic process currently used but it is more pragmatic and cost effective.

The Voluntary Remediation Program has many benefits:

- Provides a clear, accelerated, achievable and realistic path for removing more sites from the Hazardous Site Inventory while still protecting human health and the environment, putting property back to productive use faster
- Decreases site remediation costs (both public and private)
- Is technically up-to-date and uses scientifically acceptable practices recognized and used by USEPA and other states
- Allows EPD to run more efficiently and to focus on those abandoned or government-owned sites that pose a danger to human health and the environment

**For more information, contact the Georgia Chemistry Council**

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