



# Bill Summary

## The Dam Safety Bill, 2010

The Dam Safety Bill, 2010 was introduced in the Lok Sabha on August 30, 2010 by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Water Resources, Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal. The Bill was referred to the Standing Committee on Water Resources, which is scheduled to submit its report within three months.

- The Bill seeks to provide for the surveillance, inspection and operation of all dams of certain parameters to ensure their safe functioning.
- The law is applicable to Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal (and Union Territories) because their Legislatures passed a resolution for an Act of Parliament. It may apply to any other state if they pass a resolution on the matter.
- Every dam owned by a public sector undertaking or any institution owned by the government is within the scope of this law.
- A National Committee on Dam Safety is to be established with the Chairman, Central Water Commission as the Chairperson and at least 11 other specified members. It shall meet at least twice a year.
- The functions of the National Committee include (a) monitoring the functioning of state or non-state dam safety organisations; (b) evaluating dam safety procedures in various states and suggest ways to improve dam safety practices consistent with international practices and Indian conditions; (c) evolving a comprehensive dam safety management approach; and (d) advise on specific matters of dam safety to the central or state governments.
- The central government shall establish a Central Dam Safety Organisation within the Central Water Commission. Its functions include providing technical and managerial assistance to State Dam Safety Organisations (established by the state government); maintain a data-base of all specified dams including distress conditions; maintain records of major dam failures; and resolve disputes between state dam safety organisations. The states shall establish a State Committee on Dam Safety if they have more than 20 dams. The Committee shall review the work of the State Dam Safety Organisations, recommend measures for safety of a specified dam, and establish priorities among projects of remedial safety works.
- In states with less than 20 dams, there shall be a State Dam Safety Cell headed by a Superintendent Engineer. Every dam owner (other than central and state governments)

owning more than 10 specified dams shall establish Non-State Dam Safety Organisation.

- In states without the state committees, the progress of work of the State Dam Safety Organisation shall be undertaken by the National Committee on Dam Safety through the Central Dam Safety Organisation.
- All these bodies at the state level shall keep perpetual vigilance, carry out routine inspections and monitor the operation and maintenance of all specified dams.
- All state governments and other owners shall earmark sufficient funds for maintenance and repair of specified dams.
- Every state government and owner of specified dam shall compile all technical documentations concerning hydrology, dam foundation, structural engineering of dam, and watershed upstream of dam.
- The qualifications of every individual responsible for dam safety shall be prescribed by the Central Dam Safety Organisation.
- All cost of investigation of a specified dam shall be borne by the owner.
- The construction of new dams or alterations shall be undertaken only with the approval of a competent authority as may be specified by the central or state government. All new specified dams shall be investigated, designed and constructed by the organizations empowered to do so.
- The Bill lays down the regulatory procedure to be followed before initial filing of reservoirs. Every owner has to get his dams inspected periodically and have a minimum number of instrumentations installed.
- Every owner of specified dams have to establish a disaster management plan and an emergency action plan. Every 10 years there has to be a comprehensive dam safety evaluation arranged by the state or non-state dam safety organisation or cell. The first one to be conducted within five years of the Act coming into force. The results shall be reported to the state government.
- Dam owners of non-specified dams shall undertake measures to ensure safety of the dams and comply with guidelines of state governments. The Bill also lays down measures of dam safety if they lie outside Indian territory.

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